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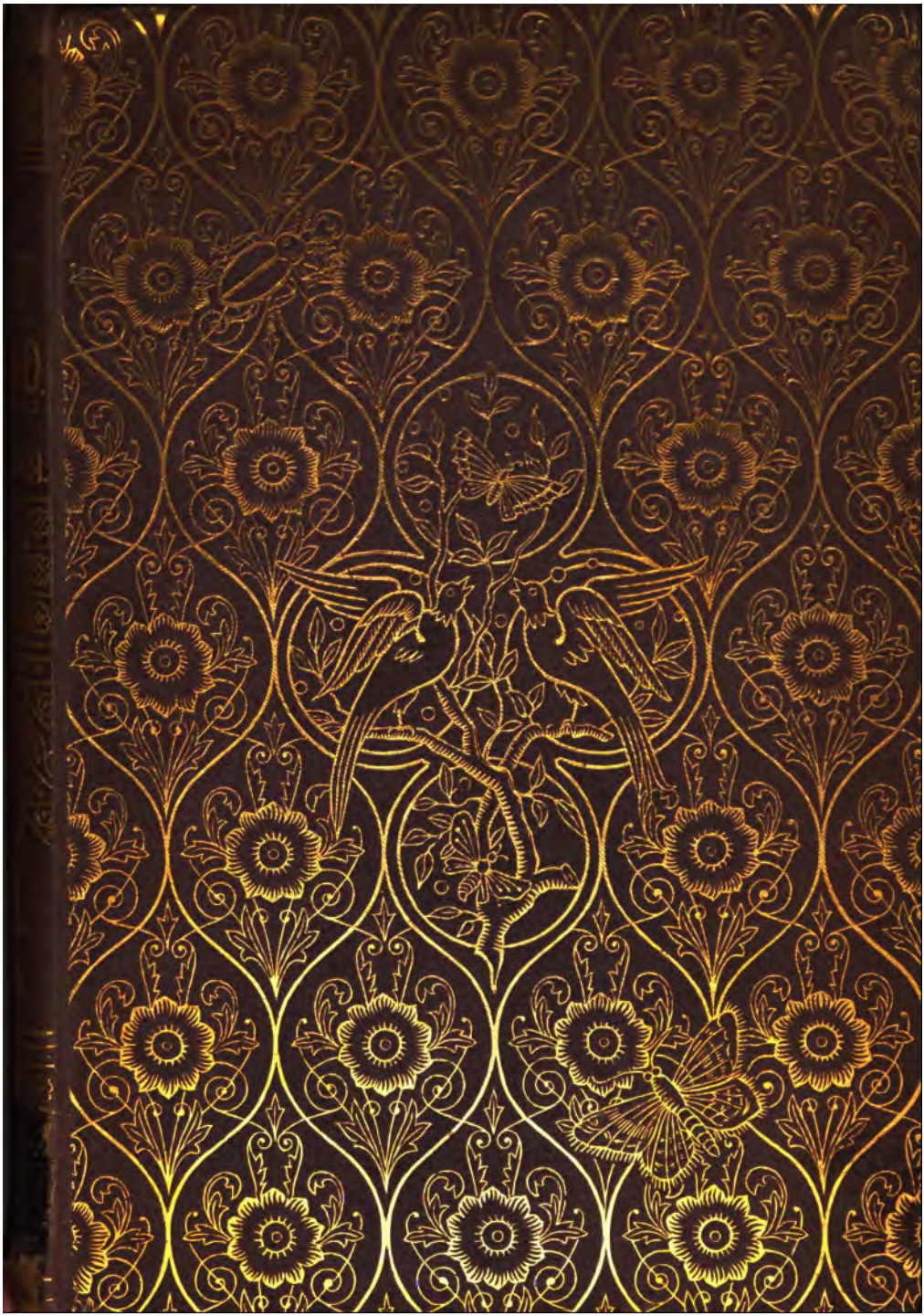

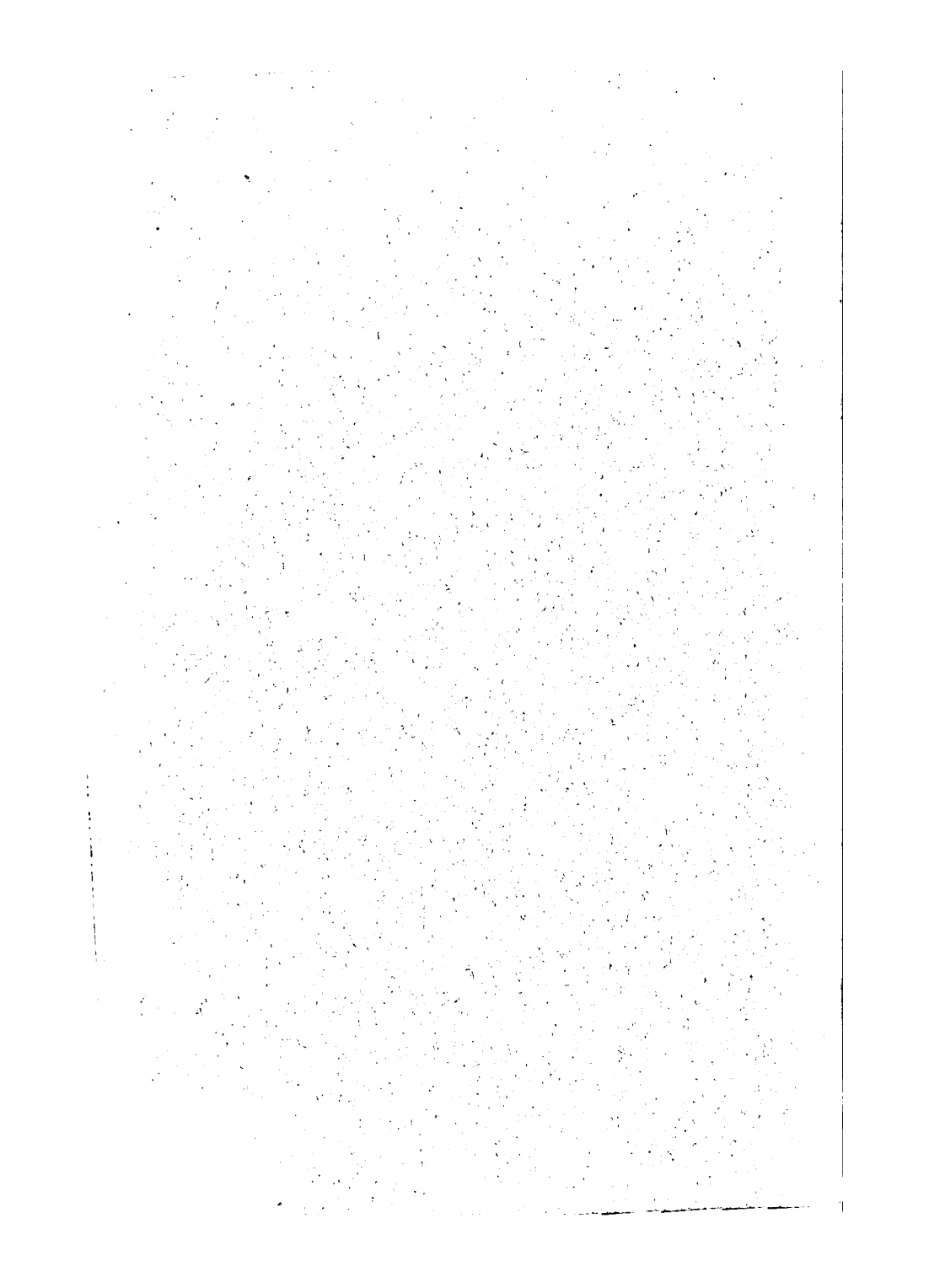

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BY

HENRY S. LEIGH,

AUTHOR OF "CAROLS OF COCKAYNE," ETC.

London:
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1878.

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To

FREDERICK LOCKER

These Verses

are dedicated by his grateful admirer

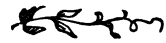
THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THIS is the third book of rhymes with which I have tried the patience of the public. My present volume, like my two previous ones, is composed of pieces that have already seen the light in various periodicals. However unsatisfactory the reader may pronounce them in a collected form, I trust that their brevity will preserve them from the charge of being separately tedious.

To those gentlemen who have given me the right of republication, I beg to convey hereby my sincere thanks.

H. S. L.



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GOOD-BYE, MUSE!

(A VALEDICTORY INTRODUCTION.)

ADIEU to my pens—to my ink—to my paper—
The slaves that enslaved me, to laugh me to scorn.
Farewell to the gas—to the oil—to the taper—
That beamed on my vigil from darkness to morn.
Go, hang up my harp, like the mute one of Tara;
No more shall it throb to my lyric or lay;
The pastures of rhyme are for me a Sahara,
No more to be traversed by night or by day.

Oh, Muse! oh, my private particular dear one;
In vain did I single thee forth from the Nine.
Thou never wilt answer—thou never wilt hear one—
I never can hope for ten minutes of thine.
I seek not a gallop, I ask but a canter;
Say, where, oh, ye Muses, can Pegasus be?—
While bards by the dozen may mount him *instanter*,
He never stirs out of the stable for *me*.

My wish was to carol but lightly and gaily;—
To give to the crowd in its moments of mirth
Faint echoes of Praed and of Butterfly Bayly,
And flutter my wings pretty close to the earth.
Our tribe never aims for the brow of Parnassus,
We seek no refreshing from Castaly's rill;—
Unheeding the great who mount upward and pass us,
We stop to play games at the foot of the hill.

Farewell to ye, Muses! I quit your dominion,
I leave it this minute, and leave it for good;
Meanwhile I may state, as my settled opinion,
That none of ye treated me quite as ye *should*.
Some trade or department of commerce I'll follow,
And fight for the pounds and the shillings and pence;
And if I say, *Sic me servavit Apollo*,
'Tis meant in the strictly ironical sense.

THE WIDOW AND HER BOY.

THE mateless and the fatherless—upon the world alone!
Two dreamers o'er a happy past—a past for ever flown.
No brightness has the day for *them*, no calmness has the night;
For *them* the sunny summer-time no longer brings delight.
Whene'er they take their walks abroad, how many poor they see
Whose days are full of industry, whose nights are full of glee!
What marvel that they mourn for *him*—he died not long ago—
By whose decease the leather trade sustained so sad a blow?

Some say 'tis forty blessed years, while some say forty-five,
Since Edith S——, the widow'd one, began to be alive.

As good a judge of years am I as others claim to be,
And I consider Edith S—— exactly forty-three.
They hint that she is lowly born—they tell me she is fat—
They call her ugliness itself; she *is*, but what of that?
I plant my faith in dividends, my confidence in rents;
House property is *not* a dream, no more are Three per Cents.

We met—methinks 'twas in a crowd—a month ago and more.
Be still, my giddy heart, be still!—To see was to adore.
Enough, enough! I dare do all that may become a man;
But what was *I*?—A City clerk, with nothing much *per ann.*
Yet, warmed with wine and enterprise, I breathed my early love;
I swore by all the earth below and all the stars above.
She heard me.—Did she understand? Her face she coyly hid;
But, by the pressure of her hand, I rather think she *did.*

I told you, reader—did I not?—she had an only child:
A half-neglected thing of ten, intractable and wild.
Nay, "wild" is all inadequate—"intractable" is weak
To paint that soul of impudence, that prodigy of cheek.

I love to sport with little ones; I love the merry tricks
Of little boys or little girls of only five or six.
Their silly talk, their winning ways, amuse me now and then;
But if I hate one living thing, it is a boy of ten.

He calls me "poor old buffer," too, or words to that effect;
And when he cracks my spectacles, I own that I object.
Though little more than thirty-four, I'm growing rather bald,
But scarcely wish to hear the fact so pointedly recall'd.
He hides my hat, my overcoat, my walking-stick, my gloves
(Which feats of ingenuity his tender mother loves).
He has too little work to do, and much—*too* much —of play:
I know a first-rate boarding school a hundred miles away.

Suppose upon my lowly suit the wealthy widow smiled,
I might assert my claim, perhaps, to castigate the child.
No doubt the duty would be mine to exercise a right
Of second-hand paternity upon that widow's mite.

It nearly makes me ill to see a fellow-creature
weep;—
Still, boys are very obstinate—and canes are very
cheap.
'Twould be a sore necessity—but, reader, *entre nous*,
I think that little imp would prove the sorer of the
two.

I have a turn for wedded life, and long to settle down:
She owns a house in Devonshire—another one in
town.
I shan't regret the City much: its drudgery I hate:
'Tis only cynics, after all, who scoff at silver plate.
And yet there is a bitter pill, one thorn among the
flow'rs;
A nightmare of a deadly form to mock my married
hours.
The Hymeneal bond, methinks, would bring me little
joy:
I *might* put up with Edith S——; I *cannot* stand the
boy!

MY PECULIARITY.

YE poets, when suddenly summoned away
From the world's petty sphere to the region of rhyme,
The importunate call at a moment obey,
To indulge in the playful or grasp the sublime.
I've indited impromptus again and again,
While bewildered—it matters not how or by whom;
I can write at my club, on the boat, in a train;—
But I never can write with a wasp in the room.

'Tis twilight. The suburbs are tranquil and calm
(And my own is as tranquil and calm as the rest);
So I sit by my lattice, inhaling the balm
That is borne on the zephyr—methinks from the west.
I am far from the haunts and the passions of men,
Among birds in full feather and roses in bloom;—
What an idyll to-night could I give to my pen!
But I never could write with a wasp in the room.

From Flora's dominion, ah! why should he roam,
To invade—and unbidden—Apollo's domain?

I opine that his object in tracking me home
  Is to drive the gay anapæsts out of my brain.
Fly away, pretty guest, fly away from the shade!
  'Tis philosophers only that bask in the gloom.
I have money to earn, there is verse to be made;
  And I never can write with a wasp in the room.

Not gone? Very well, then; 'tis war to the knife.
  I appeal to the *ultima ratio* of kings.
I have proffered you liberty. Look to your life!
  Cotton handkerchiefs knotted are dangerous things.
If that weapon should fail, there are others in store:
  I've a poker, a shovel, some tongs, and a broom.
I am eager for work, as I told you before;
  And I never can write with a wasp in the room.

'Tis finished: retributive justice is dealt!
  You may think me severe, but it's one of my ways;
For, when once an antipathy comes to be felt,
  It is felt evermore to the end of our days.
When my own shall be ended—it matters not how—
  They may carve on the marble that graces my tomb—
"He was not a bad poet, as poets go *now*;
  But he never could write with a wasp in the room!"

THE CONTENTED COCKNEY.

LET the cedars of Lebanon squander their shade
On the Palestine youth or the Palestine maid.
To the rose that is queen of thy valley, Cashmere,
Let the nightingale sing what the rose cannot hear.
I suppose that the rose and the cedar must be
Some particular plant and particular tree;
But they carry no sentiments, tender or grand,
To the soul of a gentleman born in the Strand.

There is grandeur in plenty to capture the eye
Where the proud Himalayas mount up to the sky.
There is food for the fancy as well as the sight
Where the broad Mississippi careers in its might.
But thy mountain, O Ludgate, though scarcely sublime,
Hath a charm of its own, and is easy to climb;
And the best river scenery waits my command
In a glance at the Thames from a street in the Strand.

On the peaks of the Tyrol the hunter is heard
As he mocks with his jodel the cloud-loving bird;
And the peasants in France and the gipsies of Spain
Daily carol or dance to some pastoral strain.
Let the gipsies of Spain and the peasants in France
Go ahead—but I neither can carol nor dance;
So I listen, contented and calm, to a band
Of the tuneful Teutonics who favour the Strand.

Let the mountain and river, the cedar and rose,
To the optics of others their beauty disclose.
Let the gipsies and peasants and gay Tyrolese
Grow as fond of their dance and their song as they please.
But the soul of the bard, though to limits confined,
Is at least sympathetic and yearns for its kind.
There are themes to infinity always on hand
For the pen of the poet who chants of the Strand.

CUPID'S A B C.

YEARS have elapsed—a few bright, many shady—
(More than I'm willing to say)
Since I devotedly loved a young lady
Living just over the way.
Sweet seventeen, and as fair as a lily
(Show me the lily so fair)!
What was the wonder I fell willy-nilly
Head over heels in the snare?

Only a clerk, not a year from a school yet,
Wages and wits on a par;
Playing the Romeo to *Somebody's* Juliet,
Like a true tragedy star.
How could I settle to commerce or trading,
Toss'd on an ocean of care?
Freighted with doubts (as *per* Love's bill of lading)
Bound for the Gulf of Despair!

How did I waste the whole mornings together,
How by my window I stood,
Waiting and waiting, and wondering whether
Waiting would bring any good.
Smiles and salutes inexpressibly tender
Daily went over the street.
I at discretion had made my surrender;
Why was not *she* as discreet?

Thanks, many thanks, for thy welcome invention,
Friend of the deaf and the dumb;
Lending an ear to the quick apprehension,
Speech to the fingers and thumb.
Dear little word!—what a joy to repeat it!
First came an L, then an O;
Only two letters it lacks to complete it.
Can you imagine them?—No?

Love, beyond pantomime billing and cooing,
Made very little advance;
Time, the old meddler, is always undoing
All that is done by Romance.
Now that the spell has been long ago broken,
Love deaf and dumb I deride:
Now I believe that, if Romeo had *spoken*,
Juliet would not have replied.

MY THREE LOVES.

WHEN Life was all a summer day,
And I was under twenty,
Three loves were scattered in my way—
And three at once are plenty.
Three hearts, if offered with a grace,
One thinks not of refusing.
My task in this especial case
Was only that of choosing.
I knew not which to make my pet—
My pipe, cigar, or cigarette.

To cheer my night or glad my day
My pipe was ever willing;
The meerschaum or the lowly clay
Alike repaid the filling.
Grown men delight in blowing clouds,
As boys in blowing bubbles;
Our cares to puff away in crowds,
And banish all our troubles.
My pipe I nearly made my pet,
Above cigar or cigarette.

A tiny paper, tightly rolled
About some Latakia,
Contains within its magic fold
A mighty *panacea.*
Some thought of sorrow or of strife
At ev'ry whiff will vanish;
And all the scenery of life
Turn picturesquely Spanish.
But still I could not quite forget
Cigar and pipe for cigarette.

To yield an after-dinner puff,
O'er *demi-tasse* and brandy,
No cigarettes are strong enough;
No pipes are ever handy.
However grand may be the feed,
It only moves my laughter,
Unless a dry delicious weed
Appears a little after.
A prime cigar I firmly set
Above a pipe or cigarette.

But, after all, I try in vain
To fetter my opinion;
Since each upon my giddy brain
Has boasted a dominion.
Comparisons I'll not provoke,
Lest *all* should be offended.

Let this discussion end in smoke,
As many more have ended.
And each I'll make a special pet;—
My pipe, cigar, and cigarette.

"TIME! TIME!"

A WEARY, dreary lot is mine—a weary, dreary life.—
I wage against my destiny a long and bitter strife.
By day and night (though vainly quite) the contest I renew.—
Ah, me! that I was ever born a clock of ormolu!
Before a lordly looking-glass, above a pleasant fire,
I ply my task. "What more," you ask, "would any clock desire?"—
Away, away! No flesh and blood can properly divine
This tedious, dull monotony that seems for ever mine.

When I was young and innocent I fancied it sublime
To mark each flying footstep of that grand old runner, Time.
Like any proper boy or girl who learns the letters through,
I did my duty gallantly—for just a year or two.
It seems to me a century! We clocks grow very fast.
My baby days are over, and my boyish ones are past.

As model of propriety I've acted pretty long;
But now, I own, I *should* so like—to go a little wrong!

Oh, if my key were only lost, and I could have my way!—
I'd never be correct again throughout the merry day.
Like any decent horologe I'd never deign to go,
But always be a little fast or else a little slow.
And I would play old gooseberry with men I didn't like;
And, when it was no hour at all, I'd always give a strike.
When anybody put me right, I'd get so wrong again,
That nobody should ever be in time for any train.

My master is a flighty wag—well known about the town;
He treats me very kindly, but resents my running-down.
And, while he winds me up again, I murmur with a groan:
"You're fond enough of rest yourself. *Do* leave your clock alone!"
He studies metaphysics, and occasionally sends
Nocturnal invitations to his philosophic friends.
I listen while they try to prove the Freedom of the Will;
Yet, though I strive, I can't contrive to keep one second still.

I've known such gay and giddy clocks—I recollect
them now—
Brimful of mirth and merriment, they went on *anyhow*;
As though it mattered not a jot how ill a clock
behaves,
So long as it can only quote that "Time was made
for slaves!"
I envy them their liberty; I pine beneath my chains.
The true Bohemian devilry is running through my
veins.
Oh, for a single wicked hour!—Pray grant me, Fate,
the boon
Of striking *one* while yonder sun proclaims the hour
of *noon!*

AFTER THE BANQUET.

THE revels are over—the orgy is past;
All my lively companions have left me at last;
And the half-dozen strokes of my long-cherished clock
Are effaced by the strains of the shrill-crowing cock.
In its grave lies the laughter that burst from our lips
Over Honeyman's ditties and Funnyman's quips.
Not an echo survives in the dawn's chilly light
Of the mirth and the music that gleamed through the night.

There were dainties of every conceivable shape;
There was Bass—there was Allsopp—and blood of the grape.
There were spirits, arranged by some cunning device
To be not very noxious and yet very nice.
But the thoughts of the feast bring a gloom to my brow,
As I gaze on the wrecks that remain of it *now*;
And a few bitter sentiments enter my head,
While I swiftly but sadly prepare me for bed.

As I glance at yon blank and untenanted shell
Where it once was the pride of an oyster to dwell,
I can scarcely restrain the too sensitive tear
And the wish to behold its inhabitant here.
Yonder bowl, I remember, held salad inside,
Where the herbs and the lobster in interest vied;
Yonder bottles, once brimming, look now so forlorn
That I trace through their bodies the advent of morn.

Yet why should I murmur?—That sunny Champagne
Was productive of Jones's most rollicking vein;
And I never believed that young Simmons could pun
Till the serious drink of the night was begun.
Though the scent of tobacco still sickens the air,
My cigars were pronounced a success—and they *were*.
Sammy Travers, who came to me down in the dumps,
Made a joke after three of them. There are the
stumps.

Ah, Youth is the gaslight, and Age is the gray,—
Will the follies of night bear the beams of the day?
It is hardly for butterfly-poets to preach,
But at forty the learner may set up to teach.
Giddy boys go along, with your jokes and your song:
Which are all very pleasant, and not very wrong.
But the dawning of Reason, Philosophy tells,
Only leave empty bottles—and ashes—and shells.

LINES

WRITTEN ON A BANK HOLIDAY.

AURORA brings a sunny day—
Serene the sky, the air delicious;
And lads and lassies all are gay
To find the weather so auspicious.
In ecstasy without alloy
They chirp the matutinal ditty;
And all are yielded up to joy
Who populate our giant city.

Nay, said I "all"? The giddy throng
May taste the thrill of promised pleasure;
But not for *me* the frolic song,
The merry laugh, the mazy measure.
Not mine to join some jolly band,
But mine to pine in lonely sorrow;—
The shops are closed along the Strand,
And closed will be until to-morrow.

Not mine to-day as oftentimes—
Lulled sweetly by the flowing traffic—

To meditate my modest rhymes,
The Anapæstic or the Sapphic :
To saunter through the trim Arcade,
Where toys from ev'ry earthly nation,
With prodigality displayed,
Entrance the coming generation.

The country always hath a charm
(Though in my funny moods I quiz it) ;
There scarcely can be any harm
In paying out-of-town a visit.
But strew your Cockney crowds about—
Your Jacks, your Jennys, Toms, and Sallys—
They put the tone of landscape out,
And hardly fit the hills and valleys.

I will not wander miles away,
To find at ev'ry step a neighbour
Whom in my stroll of ev'ry day
I meet with at his daily labour.
'Twould be a boon to have him *here,*
Though I should shun him at a distance ;
My afternoon will all be drear—
And all for want of his assistance.

A TOWN PASTORAL.

MY Phyllis, of course you remember the day
When yourself and your Strephon together
Went forth in our childishly innocent way
For a stroll in the sweet sunny weather.
Of course you remember (or can, if you try)
That our names were *not* Strephon and Phyllis.
Quite otherwise ;—mine was Ezekiel A. Guy,
While your own, dear, was Emma J. Willis.

We gazed with a loving but awe-stricken glance
On the beauty that Nature discloses :
We roamed the *parterre*, and our languid advance
Was encumbered by lilies and roses.
With buds and with roots, and with blossoms and shoots,
Covent Garden's an Eden to enter ;—
What lips never moistened o'er Solomon's fruits
In that avenue christened "The Centre"?

Descending a hillock we came to the stream
And embarked on a fast-flying shallop ;

Then, swift as an image that floats through a dream,
We were borne o'er the waves at a gallop.
I made the remark that in Battersea Park
There are corners to bill or to coo in;—
While steamers ply hither and thither till dark,
And the fares are not absolute ruin.

We dallied with Nature the whole merry day,
For the whole merry day she enthralled us:
The glow of the Occident faded in gray—
And then Art in her majesty called us.
Fair Nature awhile has the earth for domain,
But the accents of Art can we smother?—
We sat through the whole of *Macbeth* at the "Lane,"
And admired Barry Something-or-Other.

So spent we in pastoral pleasures each hour—
(I except the enchantments of Drury!)—
And though *Rus in urbe* was out of our pow'r,
We transported our *Urbs* into *rure.*
Thus, thus will our days in the future go by;
For, if Strephon be dear to his Phyllis,
As true as his name is Ezekiel A. Guy,
Hers will cease to be Emma J. Willis.

A STUDY ON PHYSICS.

LITTLE Bobby was bright, little Bobby was good;
Little Bobby did all that a little boy should;
Caring more for his lessons and less for his play
Than is common with most little boys of the day.
But, if health be a blessing and sickness a curse,
Little Bobby's position could hardly be worse;
For a series of maladies (ending in fits)
Shook the system of poor little Bobby to bits.

All the softness and sympathy Nature implants
In the bosoms of parents and uncles and aunts,
On the patient were lavish'd again and again,
And the shops of the chemists were emptied in vain;
But no powder, no plaister, no potion he tried,
Had the merit of making him better inside.
So the only resource that was left for him still
Was to trust in that horror of horrors—a pill.

Little Bobby was brave, but he shudder'd with dread
From the soles of his boots to the crown of his head

For the terrible truth may as well be unveil'd—
He had lately attempted a pill—but had fail'd !
Oh, the gasp and the gurgle came back to him now,
And the thoughts of the struggle brought beads to his brow.
But the doctor was firm. "Little Bobby," said he,
"'Tis as easy, my child, as to swallow a pea."

What a hint !—Little Bobby rush'd out for a walk :
To the garden he flew—took a pod from the stalk.
There were six lovely marrowfats, not very small ;
But the boy was a hero—he bolted them all.
For he thought, by beginning to practise on these,
To ingurgitate pills with comparative ease.
So he swallow'd and swallow'd ; in fact, such a lot
That the pods of the marrowfats covered the spot.

But there chanced a mishap for which nobody look'd :
It is rarely that peas will digest when uncook'd.
Little Bobby was taken so frightfully ill
That no physic would cure him, not even a pill.
When they brought him a box with a couple inside,
He disposed of the pair, mutter'd "Thank you"—and died ;
And the loss which his parents were left to deplore
Gave to Physical Science one martyr the more.

THE BELLS OF SAINT MARTIN'S.

(WRITTEN IN SICKNESS.)

LYING as close a captive here
As Damiens on his bed of steel,
Restless I turn and lend an ear
To ev'ry fast-revolving wheel.
My spirit would be all unmann'd
In silent or suburban gloom ;—
But in the gay and giddy Strand
My Cockney soul hath elbow-room.

I cannot walk ; I cannot stir—
Save painfully from side to side.
My fate, should any fire occur,
Simply consists in getting fried.
I dream by day, and watch by night
The dancing shadows on the wall.
My couch, though not an Eden quite,
Is not unpleasant, after all.

On Friday nights at eight o'clock
Begins my merriest of times :

My cradled slumberings to rock
  Ring out Saint Martin's merry chimes.
My head may throb, my bones may ache:
  But—when those happy bells begin—
I murmur (only half awake),
  "Peace to the soul of Nelly Gwynne!"

The ringers there, across the way,
  Who bid the cheering metal speak,
Receive, as portion of their pay,
  A leg of mutton once a week.
Poor Mistress Eleanor, good soul,
  Bequeathed this banquet in her will.
(Although a sinner on the whole,
  With all her faults I love her still.)

I greet with joy (as many must)
  The merry, merry bells of Yule;
And never was averse, I trust,
  From any others as a rule.
But none will ever match the mirth
  My favoured belfry's clangour yields.
Of all the chimes on all the earth
  Give *me* Saint Martin's in the Fields!

DIVIDED LOVE.

YOU fear this fickle heart of mine,
Divided in its duty,
May worship at another shrine
Before another beauty.
You thought, as many more may do,
This heart was all your own, dear:
I still declare it beats for you—
Though not for you alone, dear.

Our loves, when life is young and green,
Are very true and tender;
The gushing heart of seventeen
Is eager to surrender.
But years, alas!—and not a few—
Since first we met, are flown, dear:
I still am fond enough of you—
Though not of you alone, dear.

My later letters lack, you say,
The fervour of my former;
'Tis useless on a wintry day
To wish the day were warmer.

My rare epistles, it is true,
Have lost their summer tone, dear;
But still I correspond with you—
Though not with you alone, dear.

I scarcely dread another dart
From Cupid's cruel quiver;
Attacks are scarce upon my heart,
Though frequent on my liver.
The locks that once were black in hue
More silvery have grown, dear:
I still am constant, though, to you—
Though not to you alone, dear.

ON PASTORAL POETRY.

WHAT bores are the bards who endeavour to gull us
By aping the airs of that classical age
When Virgil and Ovid and flowing Catullus
Described the delights of the plains by the page.
These isles for a century nearly were flooded
With pastoral poesy, honeyed but slow;
And, reader, your grandmamma probably studied
The lyrics of Shenstone and Beattie and Co.

The bard is a "shepherd," and pines to discover
Where sweet Amaryllis is "tending her flocks;"
Meantime, as a rule, the disconsolate lover
His trouble confides to the valleys and rocks.
The pipe that he carries to solace his roaming,
For melody—not for tobacco—is meant;
And all the day long, from the dawn to the "gloaming,"
It worries the echoes to any extent.

Such language is worse than affected or shady;—
I never, I own, could exactly explain

Why a modern fine gentleman courting a lady
Should call her a "nymph" or himself be a "swain."
Suppose it a sin—as it *is*—to play frolics
In prose or in verse with our dear mother-tongue—
The bards who committed those wicked bucolics
Are simply the biggest of sinners unhung.

The vapid conceits of their cooing and billing
Are elegant, maybe, if not very deep;—
Still, reader, I'm willing to bet you a shilling
'Twas chiefly as chops that they cared for their sheep.
Their manners are less of the fields than the cities,
Their loves have a strong metropolitan taint;
And Nature, as found in their pastoral ditties,
Is Nature in patches and powder and paint.

THE BARD'S LEGACY.

WHEN I've indited the last of my oddities,
Bidding adieu to the children of men;
Somebody searching amongst my commodities
Haply may find this identical pen.
Send it, oh, stranger, to Browning or Tennyson—
Also the wish that I breathed as my last;—
Bid him accept it, and with it my benison;
So let its future atone for its past.

Take, too, the pipe that I painted in Maryland;
Foe of my morning and friend of my night;
Feeding my fancy on Fame and on Fairyland,
Lulling my brains in its cloudy delight.
Germany owns, in her great universities,
Sons of tobacco more worthy than I;
Scores who can tell what a blessing and curse it is.—
Mine shall be Germany's pipe when I die.

Close to my heart, 'midst your other discoveries
Stranger, you'll meet with a ringlet of gold.
(Pardon the weakness; you know that a lover is
Mad when he's youthful and worse when he's old.)
If the first owner seemed loth to abandon it,
More so the present possessor would be.
Stranger, take warning, and lay not a hand on it,
Even when Death lays a hand upon *me.*

LIFE'S PLAYTHINGS.

AT the age of only eight, you'll forgive me if I state
That there never was a child like *me:*
I was not a bit inclined to devote my little mind
To the study of my A B C.
I could linger with delight over marbles or a kite,
And I left it for the humdrum boys
To be fagging all the day, for I fancied when at play
There was nothing in the world like Toys!

But my heart was in a flame, I remember, when I came
To the period of soft sixteen:
She was young and very fair, in a frock and curly hair,
And the colour of her eyes light green.
When I met her (at a dance) how she thrilled me with a glance
And a pressure of her white kid glove:
In a second I was caught, and in ecstasy I thought
There was nothing in the world like Love!

Then Ambition had a turn, and I felt my bosom burn
To be ranked among the earth's great men:
So I wrote a little rhyme—just a step from the sublime—
Tho' I reckoned it sublime *just then.*
Quite a year I threw away on a novel and a play,
That were worthy of a deathless name;
I was probably deceived, but I verily believed
There was nothing in the world like Fame!

I was awfully perplext how to fix upon the next
'Mid the treasures that the earth might hold:
Some were dearer than the rest, but the dearest and the best
And the brightest of them all seemed Gold.
But it may be—after all—even toys begin to pall,
In the worry of this long, long strife:
All my gods are overthrown, save the last—for I will own
There is nothing in the world like Life!

THE SHORTEST WAY HOME.

I.

"THE shortest way by half a mile—
I come so very often by it—
Is up the road, across the stile,
And through the meadow. Shall we try it?"
The days were not without a charm
When, talking soft and looking silly,
My Love and I walked arm-in-arm
Where lanes were lone and fields were stilly.

II.

We found so many things to say
That always, in the shiny weather,
We took the—well, the *shorter* way,
To be a longer time together.
We spoke about—(but goodness knows
Our topics of confabulation)—
About the weather, I suppose,
The crops, the harvest, and the nation.

III.

At all events, although the talk
Was rarely wise and never witty,
We ended each successive walk
With "Home already:—what a pity!"
We might have lost a little ground,
Through coming by the road selected;
Yet both agreed that we had found
The journey shorter than expected.

IV.

Does Life's experiment support
The paradox that Love proposes?
Does *any* path seem very short,
Unless it be a path of roses?
We seldom find the nearer way;
And, if we hit upon and take it,
By creeping on from day to day,
It seems as long as length can make it.

V.

The way to Fame is never brief,
The way to Wealth is ever dreary;
All earthly roads, in my belief,
Are very long and very weary.
Nay—*one* that leads through care and strife
Is rapid, when we once begin it:
We take the "short cut" *out* of life,
Although we take the longest *in* it.

MY ONLY WEAKNESS.

I HAD lately emerged from a charity school,
And was thought an intelligent boy;
I was one of the class that is known as a rule
By the title of "Hobbledy-hoy."
If you've any conception what sentiment means,
You can credit my tale when I say
That I fell into love in the course of my teens
With a nymph living over the way.

I was merely a scrub in an office, E.C.—
Where I earned my ten shillings a week—
But I felt I could climb to the top of the tree
By my talents and plenty of "cheek."
Still for good or for evil I courted my fair,
Though her prospects were not very grand;
She was one of the chorus at——Never-mind-where—
Not a million of miles from the Strand.

What a darling it was!—I escorted her back
From the Temple of Thespis at night.
Though my present was looking remarkably black,
I'd a future uncommonly bright.
From a boy in the office I grew to be clerk,
At a figure of sixty *per ann.*
While my love (in low comedy) made such a mark
That she won all the press to a man.

I was most energetic, and stuck to my desk
From a quarter to ten until five;—
While the hope of my future became in burlesque
The most promising actress alive.
Whether Byron or Albery, Reece or Burnand
Were the author, I cared not a bit.
In that house, not a million of miles from the Strand,
My adored was the pet of the pit.

I'm a partner (a junior) in Something and Co.;
And am very well off in my way.
To the circle or stalls of an evening I go
If my lady-love happens to play.
I am elderly now, and—for want of a wife—
I shall die an old bachelor yet;
But the one little weakness I've known in my life
I shall never—no, never—forget.

STANZAS.

(BY HAYNES BAYLY THE SECOND.)

THE Broadwood is opened, its tapers are lit,
And my hostess implores me to play;
She would hear me accompany lines full of wit
In my truly musicianlike way.
But my lyrics were made for the careless and free,
When my heart and my spirits were light:
Seek the lays of the lively from others, not *me;*
Let my song be a sad one to-night.

Leave, leave me, fair lady, to cherish my gloom
In a corner far, far from the throng:
Let me carry some chair to the end of the room,
And retreat from the dance and the song.
Let me mask my depression and veil my despair
From the crowd of the brilliant and bright;
Or, in case you *insist* upon hearing an air,
Let my song be a sad one to-night.

I could warble "The Last Rose of Summer," perhaps,
In a plaintive and exquisite style:
But I know I should simply and feebly collapse
In my efforts to conjure a smile.
The low-comedy manner, the sickly grimace,
Would be rather too painful a sight:—
With a load on my bosom, a cloud on my face,
Let my song be a sad one to-night.

Not a particle, thank you. No fluids can cheer
Such a state of dejection as mine.
It resists the seductive advances of beer,
And refuses the solace of wine.
No, I cannot be comic, fair lady. I trust
You regard my refusal aright.
Well, of course, if you *must* have a ballad, you *must*,—
Let my song be a sad one to-night.

MORE STANZAS.

(BY HAYNES BAYLY THE SECOND.)

I HAVE taken six glasses of sherry,
I trust they will ask me to sing;
I am feeling uncommonly merry,
And pine to go in for my fling.
I would give them no die-away ditty;
My lay should be jocund and light.
Bother sentiment—let me be witty;
Oh! let me be comic to-night.

As I sit here alone in a corner—
A slighted though eminent guest—
I resemble poor little Jack Horner,
Except that the pie is *non est.*
Yet I fain would be awfully jolly,
I fain would be gay if I might;
I am ready for frolic and folly—
Oh! let me be comic to-night.

I was grieved when my opulent uncle
  Was taken so terribly ill.
'Tis a fearful affair, a carbuncle;
  And baffles all medical skill.
He is gone and has left me to suffer:
  But Time puts our sorrows to flight.
He has left me his money, poor buffer:—
  Oh! let me be comic to-night.

Let me try; I am perfectly ready,
  I've sat in this corner too long;
But my legs are a little unsteady—
  That wine was remarkably strong.
Did you say I was tipsy? Oh gammon!
  Just lift me up gently. All right.—
I can sing, sir. 'Twas only the salmon.
  Oh! let me be comic to-night.

OLD CLOTHES.

I'VE a mortal abhorrence, I vow and protest,
For a coat—or for trousers—that pass for my "best;"
And a deed I abominate having to do
Is to shine in a waistcoat aggressively new.
Could a Lincoln and Bennett be mine as a gift—
(Not the spoil of my talents or price of my thrift),
I would sneak through the suburbs at night with it on,
Till its gloss were departed—its freshness were gone.

But, alas, for the pride of the children of men!
E'en the cynic invests in a suit now and then;
Though he basks in the torrent and welcomes the storm,
As he waits for the ravages Time will perform:
And he chuckles for glee when his garb he can see
Growing threadbare at elbow and polished at knee;
Till the symptoms of age crowd around it at last,
And its bloom and its brightness are dreams of the past.

Then a day shall be born when but Chaos remains
Of that faithful companion in pleasures and pains—
When the button shall droop like the rose on her stem,
And the fissures gape frequent and wide in the hem;—
When the rents and the patches their presence proclaim
In the boldness of pride that is offspring of shame;—
And the wearer can deem it not cruel nor strange
That the voice of Society clamours for Change.

While he ferrets his bygone habiliments out,
He exults in the joys of the huntsman or scout;
Not a nook—not a corner—but straightway unfolds
A Potosi complete in the treasures it holds.
Not a coat—not a waistcoat or trouser—but shows
A regenerate novelty born of repose;
And the suits that were banished as faded and worn
Look as fresh as the dewdrop that gleams in the morn.

And moreover, whilst looking o'er garments of old
('Tis a fact that my reader may like to be told),
You have pleasant surprises again and again;
For you rarely can guess what the pockets contain.
Let me tell you a thing that occurred to myself
With some raiment I'd long ago laid on the shelf;—
While exploring in quite a promiscuous way
I discovered the change for a shilling one day!

MY CONTINENTAL TOUR.

AT eight exactly I awoke—
At nine had breakfast in a hurry;
Then o'er my matutinal smoke
Devoted half an hour to "Murray."
For, weary of the tedious town,
I longed to leave its commonplaces;
To search all Europe up and down
For novel scenes and novel faces.

I fancied I should like the North,
Especially the coast of Sweden;
Yet southern climes are imaged forth
In "Murray" as a kind of Eden.
'Twas ten o'clock, and still I sat
Without a definite suggestion.
I thought of this and thought of that;
But thought of nothing to the question.

Eleven struck. My feeble mind
No settled resolution guided.
The noonday only came to find
My plan of action undecided.
I read the "Telegraph," the "Times,"
The "Standard," and the "Advertiser."
'Twas one by old St. Clement's chimes,
And I was not a whit the wiser.

I thought of roving up the Rhine,
But steamers are my heart's abhorrence.
Another little scheme of mine
Was traversing the Alps to Florence.
Till two o'clock I strove to make
My plans, but got uncertain—very;
And so I sallied forth to take
A sandwich and a glass of sherry.

From three to four and four to five
My thoughts were in a dire confusion,
And would not aid me to arrive
At any definite conclusion.
At six I hurried off to dine,
Smoked three Manillas *con amore*,
And reached the opera by nine
To hear a little *Trovatore*.

'Tis twelve o'clock. I've been to sup.
This melancholy day is ended.
I rather think of giving up
The little trip that I intended.
The hours will soon be growing small;
I can't sit up another minute:
I won't go out of town at all,
But pass July and August *in* it.

THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE.

TALK to me only with thine eyes,
And I will hear with mine ;
Turn hither all the light that lies
In those twin orbs of thine.
I shall not miss an H or two,
Nor find as many slips
Of grammar as I daily do
From those bewitching lips.

In such a deep impassioned glance,
Could any eye suspect
A double negative, perchance ;—
Which never ain't correct.
Could any dazzled gaze descry,
In stars thus blue and bright,
A tendency to say, "Says I ;"—
Which, I says, can't be right.

Nay, Love and Prosody combined
  Sit smiling evermore
Within those eyes that speak a mind
  Above grammatic lore.
Those lips may err—they often do;
  But why should that surprise?
My love has nothing of the Blue
  About her but her eyes.

MISS ASTERISK.

(A DRAMATIC BIOGRAPHY.)

THIS lucky day I mean to lay before my lucky reader
A memorial of the trials and the triumphs of a "star."
Thalia, 'midst your followers we rarely find a leader;
And how very few the leaders who can lead us very far;
The naughty time, the merry time, has flown away for ever,
When the lords adored a Woffington, the wits a Kitty Clive.
Our comedies were wicked, still our comedies were clever,
While our Kitty was amongst us and our Woffington alive.

Miss A. adorned a pantomime, a long-ago December,
In a far-away locality but little known to Fame.
How deeply she delighted me I vividly remember,
And I fondly fancied Asterisk an angel of a name.
She spoke—'twas but a word or two. The part was not a long one.—
How I drank the modulations of her ev'ry gushing tone!
(My rapturous impression may, of course, have been a wrong one;
And I scarcely need inform you that her name was not her own.)

Provincial pits and galleries were not for such a creature,
With a face and with a figure for the boxes and the stalls.
She invaded our metropolis, and shortly was a feature
As a photo at the stationer's—a poster on the walls.
The character she opened in evades my recollection,
Though I seem, as in a vision, to behold her in it yet.
(And yet I seem to fancy, on deliberate reflection,
She personified a chambermaid—or, *Gallicè*, soubrette.)

We lost her. She deserted us, to traverse the Atlantic;
And she now enthralls Americans in farces or burlesque.
She left our country suddenly, and sent me semi-frantic;
For the comedy I wrote for her is rotting in my desk.
I strive to track her whereabouts—to trumpet her successes;
But, alas! my hopes diminish to a tiny little gleam.
Fate limits my discoveries to tiny little guesses,
And the mem'ry of Miss Asterisk is nothing but a dream.

MEDITATIONS.

(BY A LOWTHER ARCADIAN.)

SHALL I seek out a gift for my fair—
For a damsel of sweet seventeen,
With a forest of gold-coloured hair,
And the bluest of eyes ever seen?
From the ardent assaults of the sun
I retreat for a while to the shade;
Cannot *some* little traffic be done
While I lounge through the Lowther Arcade?

What a galaxy beams on my sight
As I blithely but leisurely roam!
What a chance for conferring delight
On a too-thickly tenanted home!
Here the grandpapa's heart and his dame's,
And the hearts of the girls and the boys,
May all proffer their manifold claims,
From yon spectacles down to yon toys.

Shall I purchase a fife and a drum?
E'en for babyhood music hath charms.
What a terror such things may become
In the hands of an infant in arms!
But affrighted humanity shrinks
From such barbarous weapons in dread;
I will treat her young brother, methinks,
To a boxful of soldiers instead.

I must think of her sister, of course
('Tis a sweet, pretty, innocent thing!);
Shall my choice be a small wooden horse,
Or a dainty wax doll with a spring?
She will cherish the latter, perhaps,
And at first be *so* proud of her prize;
But, alas! not a month will elapse
Ere she pokes out its bright little eyes.

It is time that I thought of my fair
(As my fair may be thinking of *me*)—
Far from easy the task, I declare,
To decide what my present shall be.
But, behold, there is sunshine above—
Let me quit the Arcade for the Strand.
By and by I will call on my love,
And present her—my heart and my hand.

HISTORIC DOUBTS.

COCKAYNE is deserted and empty to-day,
For our uncles, our aunts, and our cousins
Have cut the poor city, and hastened away
Into parts that are foreign, by dozens.
And there will they listen to legends and lies—
For each land has its mythical glories—
And open their mouths and their ears and their eyes
Over tales that are nothing but stories.

Some, bent upon Paris, will cross to Dieppe,
And may possibly linger at Rouen,
To view the Cathedral—it stands but a step
From the solemn and stately Saint Ouen.
The crammers in fashion about the Pucelle
They may treat with derision and laughter;
If burnt—she got over the accident well,
For she lived half a century after!

Fair Switzerland, clime of the mountain and lake,
Hath a charm and a spell for the rover.
Lucerne, for example,—unless we mistake—
Is a stream that is worth tripping over.
Traditions of Tell and of Gessler are told,
As a proof how the truth may be twisted;—
Poor William! He *would* have been awfully bold
If poor William had ever existed.

When Brussels he visits, the roamer will find
That his national pride may be flattered;
To gaze on that field he of course is inclined
Where the hopes of Napoleon were shattered.
Of Wellington's fame let the Briton discourse;
He believes in it—sings of it—spouts it.
That battle was won, though, by Prussians, of course;
And there breathes not a Prussian who doubts it.

The farther we wander, the more we perceive
(As a fact it is folly denying),
This world from the birthdays of Adam and Eve,
Has been terribly given to lying.
When incidents happen right under my nose
I can yield them unlimited credit;
But, thanks to my training, I'm not one of those
Who believe in a thing when they've read it.

A WORM IN THE BUD.

E'EN as a centipede amongst the roses,
Concealment fed upon my damask cheek;
The secrets that a bolder love discloses
Mine would have owned, but recked not how to speak.
Fain on my knees before my lovely lady
Could I have cooed like any turtle-dove—
Alack! my pow'rs of rhetoric were shady,
So I was coy—I never told my love.

Oft I did marvel whether she suspected
The hidden pain that wrought my soul's annoy;
In company methought that she affected
To treat me as a wild and wayward boy.
Once and again in charity she gave me
A tress of hair, a photograph, a glove.
Thus, link by link, the more did she enslave me;
But I was mute—I never told my love.

We both were poor—not indigent precisely,
But far from opulent or well to do.
I had been educated rather nicely,
And oft by verse could earn a pound or two;
My dear one made a trifle by tuition,
But had no expectations from her "guv.;"
Small chance was there to better our condition,
So I was dumb—I never told my love.

This agony, that made me daily thinner,
At length reduced me to a shocking state;
I shunned my breakfast, never touched my dinner,
And left my supper steaming on my plate.
Upon the dizzy brink of desperation
I tottered, waiting for the final shove;
And still, with any martyr's resignation,
I held my tongue—I never told my love.

Meanwhile her uncle (having lost his liver
In Indian climes, and grown a wealthy man)
Caught cold while fishing in the Hooghly river,
And straight came back again from Hindostan.
Scarce had he reached our country ere he perished,
And left his niece an heiress. Powers above!
Could I conceal the passion I had cherished?
Not for a moment—so I told my love!

TOO GOOD FOR HIS PLACE.

(A COVENT GARDEN PASTORAL.)

YOUNG Colin must quit the fair meadows of Kent,
On a trip to Great Britain's gay capital bent;
Brief leisure is Colin's of Daphne to dream,
As he pilots his waggon and whips up his team.
For the lord of young Colin hath acres to farm—
'Tis a trade that is not without merit or charm;—
And he makes it his pride, by all possible means,
To supply the big City with carrots and greens.

The team and the waggon progress through the night
(Until eastward are traces of dawn's ruddy light).—
See, they traverse the Thames, and they traverse the Strand,
And the lamps of the Market at last are at hand.
Then Colin repairs to a tavern hard by—
For the journey was lonesome, and Colin is dry.
And he thinks, while he drinks of his—never-mind-what,
O'er the memories dear to that classical spot.

"Ah, shades of the wealthy—the gay—the renowned—
Yet again do ye hover this precinct around;
Yet again with emotion your worshipper thrills,
While he watches ye crowding to Button's and Will's.
Our Congreve and Wycherley, Dryden and Pope,
Never more in the flesh to behold can we hope;
Still their spirits are here, 'mid the mart's busy din,—
Waiter!—Talking of spirits—a little more gin!

"Not a step from the corner was Garrick's abode—
Kitty Clive had a residence over the road;
Here Churchill has rhymed on his dark second floor,
And the gallants have knocked at Peg Woffington's door.
Harry Fielding's papa, the much-dreaded Sir John,
Was the Midas of Bow Street, a little way on.
What ghosts reappear 'mid the mart's busy hum!—
Waiter!—Keep'st thou the fluid called Pine-apple rum?

"Yon churchyard can boast of remarkable bones,
Though yon church be unworthy of Inigo Jones;
And yon pile at the corner—called Evans's now—
Echoed once the grand accents of Siddons, I trow.
To the deathless departed again let me drink.—
Waiter!—Fill me my goblet once more to the brink.
This libation—the last one—I'll solemnly pour:
Then return to take charge of that waggon and four!"

TRIBULATIONS OF A HAM SANDWICH.

WHEN our lives are in the gloaming, and the night comes hither fast,
Stern Mem'ry beckons back again the sunlight of the past.
The task becomes a torture as we sadly reckon o'er
The delights and the ambitions that are flown for evermore.
The last of my companions disappeared this very morn;
He has left me to my solitude, neglected and forlorn.
Alas! my sole employment is to heave the bitter sigh,
And recall my double birthplace in the cornfield and the stye.

But away, fond recollections! A distinguished Poet sings
"That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is rememb'ring happier things."
Why dwell on reminiscences that summon me so far,
While pining ignominiously within this tavern bar?

I vainly seek from dawn till eve to tempt the outer world
With coagulated mustard and a corner crisply curled.
The most untutored epicure would spurn me where I lie,
And the famine-stricken mendicant would coldly pass me by.

Can aught retard the wing of Time? Say, visionary wild,
Canst look to feel in middle age the freshness of the child?
The cruel hand of Destiny—no failing of my own—
Hath struck me down in sorrow here—stale, crumpled and alone.
Three days agone, or little more, my brief career began!
I then was topmost in the crowd, the leader of my clan.
We braved the rivalry of beef—of buns—of bread and cheese;—
We braved, to speak in metaphor, the battle and the breeze.

That merry time is over: it was yet for me to learn
All the horrors of an atmosphere that made my edges turn;—

And the fumes of the tobacco, and the odours of the drink,
And a hundred other miseries too deep for pen and ink.
While ghostly waiters flitted on their duty to and fro,
I courted public appetite where lunchers come and go;
But they deemed me all unfitted for their palates or their teeth,
So they lifted me, and bore away a friend from underneath.

And thus my life has crawled along till not a hope survives
But that of being bolted by the boy who cleans the knives:
I have my doubts about him—he's a hungry-looking brat,
But I hardly dare to fancy he would stoop so low as *that!*
I might be handed over to the kittens or the pup;
But my mustard is against me—they would cock their noses up.
I believe, if I were offered them for food this very day,
That the dog would never touch me, while the cats would run away.

ESSAY ON THE MOTH.

BY A SENTIMENTAL NATURALIST.

OH, the gay giddy moth is a child of the air,
That exults in the breezes of summer;
'Tis just at the season when blossoms are fair
That we hail with delight the new-comer.
Nor daylight alone to the rover is dear;
For by night—which is rather imprudent—
It glads him to hover unpleasantly near
To the taper that gleams for the student.

Oh, it is not alone to the sunshine above
That the wanderer flies for enjoyment;
No—e'en for the cottage he nurtures a love,
And the palace may find him employment.
Unheeded and quiet, he likes to repose
Amid heaps of respectable raiment;
In solitude eating his way as he goes,
With immunity as to the payment.

But, alas! there are beings remorseless enough
To convey to the place of his dwelling.
Tobacco and lavender, camphor and snuff,
Which he soon grows aweary of smelling.
Ah, who could proceed in this barbarous way,
If he felt—as I feel to my sorrow—
How oft the poor victim who revels to-day
Is unsure of a meal for to-morrow!

I have suffered, how long? from the gay giddy moth,
And have pined from his ruthless excesses.
A swallow-tailed garment of daintiest cloth
Is the lightest of all my distresses.
Sad loss!—I would gladly have tried to devote
All the means in my pow'r to avoid it.—
I weep for my only respectable coat,
But I trust the poor creature enjoyed it!

"*A WOMAN'S THOUGHTS ABOUT WOMEN.*"

I THINK Miss Juliet in the play
A forward little minx;
(And Mrs. Grundy loves to say
What Mrs. Grundy thinks).
Her goings-on with Montague,
I think, were quite absurd;
Such brazen conversation, too,
I think I never heard.

I think Othello much to blame
For braving married life
With Desdemona What's-her-Name,
His worse than wicked wife.
To run away at such an age,
And with a *nigger*, too:—
Such conduct, even on the stage,
I think I never knew.

I think, respecting Beatrice,
Her husband was a flat
If he expected any peace
With such a girl as that.
Her acts were never very strict,
Her talk was only jaw;
So green a youth as Benedict
I think I never saw.

I think, when Portia's wooers came
To play at pitch-and-toss,
The gentleman that won the dame
Distinctly won a loss.
I think Emilia was a shrew,
And Rosalind ill-bred;
(Such words—and from a lady, too—
I think I never read).

I think Macbeth was led astray
By naughty Lady M.
And those three witches—by the way,
I don't think much of *them.*
I think Ophelia—that's a fact—
The best of all the set;
But anybody quite so crack'd
I think I never met.

A VERY OLD FRIEND.

(IN A VERY NEW DRESS).

"How doth the little——"—DOCTOR WATTS.
"Improve each——"—MORAL SONG.

THE blossoms of Hybla, the buds of Hymettus—
Old Sicily's glory, old Attica's pride;—
In dreams we have sipped, long as Fancy would let us,
The nectar those blossoms and buds have supplied.
In dreams we have envied each gay busy rover
Who stole from the summer the sweets of its prime;
Who left the wild buttercups, daisies, and clover,
For marjoram's odours and essence of thyme.

At eve, when the wanderer—weary with roaming—
In laden satiety flew to its nest,
New trials and cares would encumber the gloaming,
And Hesperus never gave token of rest.
What poet can picture with any precision
The trials domestic economy breeds,
When Paterfamilias attempts a provision
For family wishes and family needs?

The mind philosophic, on energy musing,
  Elects as a model the hive of the bee;
A home so domestic—if mine were the choosing—
  Would surely be safest and fittest for *me.*
To banish the bowl and the dance and the revel
  Would suit my ambition, I candidly think;—
To stroll through my life at a sober dead-level,
  And live with my paper, my pens, and my ink.

'Twas thus the grave Stoics and Peripatetics
  Gave each of their minutes to learning alone;—
They taught metaphysics and studied æsthetics,
  And left us a glory completely their own.
My ink and my paper and pens I will cherish,
  And leave to the world all the wisdom I may;—
To murmur at last, when I'm ready to perish,
  "*Non perdidi diem*—I've not lost a day!"

HOW IT OCCURRED.

SHE said—But shall my pen betray
The words I cannot speak?
No; rather let Concealment prey
Upon my damask cheek.
I feel that Happiness and Mirth
May come again in glee
To every other soul on earth—
But not again to *me*.

She said—But wherefore wake again
The memories of the past?
Let Life remain a desert-plain,
And skies be still o'ercast.
She said—But shall I dare to fight
Against my Fate's decree?
Let Hope to others bring delight—
She bringeth none to *me*.

I told her—But it matters not;—
  The past could be effaced,
Were I to find some sunny spot
  In Life's eternal waste.
She answered—But I little care
  How dark my path may be.
Let Peace go smiling ev'rywhere,
  No smile she brings to *me.*

IF!

(AN ALMOST PATRIOTIC SONG.)

IF skies were bluer,
And fogs were fewer,
And fewer the storms on land and sea;—
Were shiny summers
Perpetual comers—
What an Utopia this would be!

If Life were longer,
And Faith were stronger,
If Pleasure would bide—if Care would flee;
If each were brother
To all the other—
What an Arcadia this would be!

Were Greed abolished,
And Gain demolished,
Were slavery chained and Freedom free;
If all earth's troubles
Collapsed like bubbles—
What an Elysium this would be!

"BRAG!"

THE throng unpoetic may cock up their noses,
And sneer as they list at the triumphs of Mind,
But the life of the bard is a pathway of roses;
A feast of ambrosia, with nectar combined.
My career was a solitude fit for a hermit
Till Poesy brought me success and renown;
And at present—I mildly but proudly affirm it—
I know all the authors and actors in town.

T'other day—and the day I shall fondly remember—
I met Mr. Tennyson taking a walk;
And—a singular fact!—in the month of September,
I twice overheard Barry Sullivan talk.
Then I *was* to have met Mr. Phelps at a supper,
But poor Sammy Phelps was unluckily ill;
And I recently wrote an epistle to Tupper,
Who sent me no answer—but possibly *will.*

A relation of mine, whom I love pretty dearly,
Has long been a neighbour of Thomas Carlyle's
For one peep at so deep a philosopher merely
I'd walk with alacrity two or three miles.
To his trim little garden in moments of leisure
The Teacher goes frequently forth for a crawl;
And it's thus I contrive with devotional pleasure
To gaze upon Thomas from over the wall.

At the Albion I mix with your drinkers and smokers,
For wags of the maddest are there to be met;
There are Hollingshead, Byron, and such merry jokers,
And Gilbert, Burnand, and the cream of the set.
Such wit, and such humour! Say, where can you match them?—
Their quips and the cranks are the best of the day;
Only somehow I never can properly catch them,
From sitting some two or three boxes away.

So I drink to my Muse and my patron Apollo,
Who taught me to thread the recesses of rhyme;
For the bard's is a princely profession to follow—
Parnassus a rosy excrescence to climb.
I see in my visions Calliope flying
To bear my renown to posterity down;
I can hear her exalting my merits, and crying—
"He knew all the authors and actors in town!"

ALL ABROAD.

I'VE journeyed over many seas,
And wandered under many skies;
I've hoarded knowledge by degrees,
Some useful and some otherwise.
My Fatherland I fondly call
The dearest corner of the earth;
And yet I scarcely know at all
The British Isles that gave me birth.

All mountain-peaks to me are fair;
I fondly love the lovely Alps;
What curly clouds they daily wear,
Like wigs upon their snowy scalps!
O'er all their passes have I been,
And scaled their very highest height;
Helvellyn I have never seen,
While Snowdon is a stranger quite.

Still treasured for their own sweet sakes,
To memory oft and oft return
Helvetia's clear and placid lakes,
Geneva—Zurich—and Lucerne.
Italia, too, hath blessed my sight
With lakes as placid and as clear;
Yet never did these eyes alight
On Derwent or on Windermere.

I've watched with awe thine angry strife,
Sublime Schaffhausen, o'er and o'er.
I never chanced in all my life
To view thy cataract, Lodore.
With tardy mules and lazy wheels
The *diligence* has dragged me far;—
I cannot fancy how it feels
To traverse Dublin on a car.

My cosmopolitan career
At last is drawing to a close:
I'll dedicate at least a year
To things beneath my very nose.
Considering that I stand so high
As master of so many styles,
I *may* complete before I die
A "Guide-Book to the British Isles."

MY OLD ARM-CHAIR.

I LOATHE it—I loathe it—and who shall dare
To chide me for loathing my own arm-chair?
It haunts me daily, and wheels its flight
Into the dreams that I dream by night.
When I look at its cover of outworn chintz,
Where age and washing have blurred the tints,
No earthly passion can well compare
With my deadly hate for that old arm-chair.

I loved with a love of the noblest kind;—
Sensitive—delicate—most refined.
But she spurned my love and betrayed her vow,
And is only a Mrs. McKenzie now.
I cannot forget though I might forgive;—
My wrongs will follow me whilst I live.
But *this* is the memory worst to bear;—
She once took tea in that old arm-chair.

I owned a creditor—(frightful man !)—
Who bored me as creditors only can.
He vaguely talked of a small amount
Which took the shape of an old account.
Twice in the week, I remember well,
He banged my knocker or twanged my bell.
If he found me without any cash to spare,
He called me names from that old arm-chair.

Incubi, demons, nightmares, owls,
Vampires, goblins, ghosts, and ghouls,
Visit that seat, and around it swarm
In every possible shape and form.
My life is a torture, a perfect curse—
My home is a dungeon, or something worse
I shall never be happy or freed from care
Until I get rid of that old arm-chair.

MY FELLOW-TRAVELLER.

I'VE met a million ugly men
In going east and going west.
I've met, it may be, nine or ten
More ugly than the ugly rest.
But never gazed I anywhere
Upon a face—until to-day—
Distinctly qualified to bear
The palm of ugliness away.
These lines—my beautiful, my own—
I write for *you*—and you alone.

At Hammersmith I caught the train,
And sought my lowly second-class.
All suddenly a window-pane
Revealed your visage through the glass.
I oped the door—I know not how—
Perhaps I seemed abruptly rude;
But inly I had formed a vow
To come and share your solitude.
These lines—my beautiful, my own—
I write for *you*—and you alone.

I've read a very ghastly tale
About a very ghastly man,
Who hid himself within a veil,
And went about in Khorassan.
He came to grief, unless I err;
And in a caldron took a dive.
Believe me, I am happy, Sir,
To find that *you* are still alive.
These lines—my beautiful, my own—
I write for *you*—and you alone.

I felt within my bosom rise
A pleasure not unmixed with awe,
When slumber closed your leaden eyes,
And sleep unlocked your nether jaw.
I give you, for your own sweet sake,
This proverb—new, and rather deep;—
True Ugliness, when wide awake,
Is pale to Ugliness asleep.
These lines—my beautiful, my own—
I write for *you*—and you alone.

We flew along from place to place;—
You never moved, you never woke;
While, gazing on your placid face,
I smoked a philosophic smoke.

At length we came to Charing Cross;—
How brief, alas! the journey seems.
I left you—and I felt the loss—
But I regained you in my dreams.
These lines—my beautiful, my own—
I write for *you*—and you alone.

MEDITATIONS ON A FRANKFORT SAUSAGE.

THE more profoundly men reflect,
The more they find, by Logic's laws,
That what at first is called *Effect*
In course of time becometh *Cause.*
Of ev'ry link in Matter's chain
The end and origin are clear;
Yet Reason seems to ask in vain,
"How came the Frankfort sausage here?"

Behold the meek and lowly hen!—
The timely egg will she produce.
(That egg, though addled now and then,
Will now and then be fit for use.)
Observe how Nature hath her ways
Above the petty ways of men:—
Yon timely egg, ere many days,
May grow a meek and lowly hen.

Yet no analysis may test—
  Although it strive and strive again—
This gloomy, dark, forbidding guest
  That hails from Frankfort-on-the-Maine.
Of all beside we trace the birth;
  We know the when—the where—the how.
Oh say, grim sojourner on earth,
  Mysterious Being—what art *thou?*

Did Nassau nurse thy glowing youth
  Amongst the valleys and the rocks?
Wast thou a boar—nay, tell the truth—
  Or part of thee, perchance, an ox?
Thou hadst a mother—hadst thou not?
  No doubt thou also hadst a sire:—
But each, by Fortune's bitter lot,
  Hath passed before thee to the fire.

But wherefore dig thy sorrows up,
  Or broach a theme so full of gloom?—
Lo, thou hast quaff'd thy bitter cup,
  And mash'd potatoes are thy doom.
It boots not whether beef or pork;—
  Why risk these wild hypotheses?—
Go, Mary, bring a knife and fork;
  And fetch the mustard, if you please!

THE FORSAKEN ONE.

THE dark, chilly nights of the winter are near,
And the shrill cry of "Muffins" is heard in the land;
As I strive, sitting sadly in solitude here,
To evoke the gay verse from the frost-bitten hand;
But I care not—the days may be drear as they will,
And the flowers may be faded, the birds may be flown;
There is one living creature that clings to me still;—
'Tis the last fly of Summer, left brooding alone.

On my half-covered foolscap he crawls to and fro,
And his wings flip my vowels and consonants by.
It were well that he tarried one minute, or so,
Till the passionate lines on my paper grew dry.
From a blue-inky grave have I rescued him twice;
It is time I asserted a will of my own.
Let me blandly administer words of advice
To the last fly of Summer, left brooding alone.

"Ah, wherefore, thou lingerer, wherefore delay?
All thy lively companions are banished or slain.
Look alive—make an effort—go, haste thee away
To fair Italy's climate, or sweet sunny Spain.
There are dangers in store—oh, believe in thy bard—
When the cold bitter blasts of the autumn have blown;
And the winter will turn out uncommonly hard
For the last fly of Summer, left brooding alone.

"When the Ulster descends from its home on the hook,
And the warmth-giving wrappers return from the wash;—
When the coyly-hid comforter starts from its nook,
And we hunt up the ugly but useful golosh;—
When the ornaments glitter no more on the stove,
And the morn wears a cheerless and menacing tone;—
It will all be intensely unpleasant, by Jove!
To the last fly of Summer, left brooding alone.

"'Twill be mercy, perchance, can I spare thee the ills
That arise from the fogs, and the frosts, and the snow;

From the colds, the rheumatics, the coughs, and the chills,
Which envelop mankind from the top to the toe.
It will take but a second—one stroke of my pen ;—
It will cost thee no pang—not a sigh, not a groan.
Far away will the world and its troubles be *then*
From the last fly of Summer, left brooding alone.

THE MUSIC OF THE PAST.

LET Wagner—the Bard of the Future—go hang,
With his rumpus and riot and rattle:—
His praise may be penn'd by a critical gang,
But I heed not a tittle their tattle.
No tune of the future or present can yield
Such a charm to this organ auricular
As yielded the ditties of Dibdin and Shield,
And of Arne—yes, of Arne in particular.

Old melodies haunt me from long, long ago,
Of a taste and a style that have perished.
Excuse me,—I'm rather old-fashioned, you know;
And I love what my grandmamma cherished.
Though years have escaped me, like so many days,
The desire is incessantly lingering
To listen once more while my grandmamma plays,
With her comical *rococo* fingering.

She sang, too—a little—did grandmamma dear;—
  She would garnish a fugue of Scarlatti,
By letting me hear "Said a Smile to a Tear,"
  Or by crooning my pet "*Batti, batti.*"
To grasp at the latter would cost me a strain;
  For—though always a creature of sentiment—
I caught but a word of it now and again,
  Only knowing what one out of twenty meant.

We fogies have often a way, it appears
  (And a way it is folly concealing),
Of letting our hearts run away with our ears,
  And our science elope with our feeling.
Those tones of the past, that have sunk to their tomb,
  May at present be laughed at as funny ones;—
I cling to them still in the hours of my gloom,
  For they carry me back to my sunny ones.

A PLAIN COOK.

ONE Hannah Glasse, a homely dame,
Long long ago produced a book
(For fun—for profit—or for fame)
Which taught our grannies how to cook.
Suppose we run it through, and seize
A stray quotation as we pass.
To dress a Hare.—Attention, please!—
"First catch your Hare," says Hannah Glasse.

Methinks 'tis easy, reader dear,
To find a moral in the phrase.—
I've dreamed about a bright career
Through half my nights and all my days.
By day and night my visions bring
A bard's ambition; but, alas!
My Muse is dumb and cannot sing.—
"First catch your Hare," says Hannah Glasse.

It is not meet the poet's life
  Should pass untended and alone ;—
I'd fain discover in a wife
  Some heart responsive to my own.
No proud patrician would I woo,
  Nor one of the plebeian class ;
But something just between the two.—
  " First catch your Hare," says Hannah Glasse.

With just a thousand pounds a year,
  Proceeding from the Three-per-cents,
My future might be pretty clear
  (With something in the way of rents).
But gold is not for such as I ;
  My stock in trade is only brass,
I *may* be wealthy by-and-by.—
  " First catch your Hare," says Hannah Glasse.

USED UP.

IN Canada this afternoon
They chase the grisly bear,
While swarth Kentucky hunts the coon
Or seeks the 'possum's lair.
Nor coons nor 'possums *I* pursue,
Nor court the bear's embrace;
I can but maim a cat or two—
My life is commonplace.

The Sallee rover after dark
Will sweep across the sea;
The Algerine will steer his bark
In search of £ *s. d.*
When *I* desire to go afloat
(Which rarely is the case),
I can but seek the Chelsea boat—
My life is commonplace.

The roundelay of rapture fills
  The valleys of Cashmere;
The river dances, and the hills
  Are stooping down to hear.
Of music, frankly I avow,
  I scarcely own a trace;
I can but make a jolly row—
  My life is commonplace.

Constantinople's minarets
  Gleam brightly in the sun;
He slowly sets, and half regrets
  His daily work is done.
The view *I* get from my domains
  Is limited in space;
I can but see Saint Clement Danes—
  My life is commonplace.

In Timbuctoo, a blest retreat,
  Where Instinct stands for Law,
To-night perchance the chiefs will eat
  A missionary raw.
Full gladly *I* would sit and take
  My meals with such a race;
I can but order chop or steak—
  My life is commonplace.

I hate the rules that bind me down
  Within my native isle;
I wish to travel out of town,
  And let my domicile.
In short, I wish to overhaul
  The universe's face,
And shift my quarters once for all—
  My life is commonplace.

REAL FRIENDS.

OF all the blessings we enjoy—
Of all the treasures Luck may send—
For man mature, or growing boy,
The brightest is a bosom-friend.
True bosom-friends to me have been—
Though neither of my kin or kith—
My close companions Tommy Green,
And Freddy Brown, and Sammy Smith.

In Tommy Green's expressive eye
The passions of the lion shine;
How like the lightning would he fly
To crush to dust some foe of mine!
But could I calmly to the fight
Expose the truest soul alive?—
I'm half-a-dozen feet in height,
While Tommy Green is under five.

At any stage of Life's career,
  Should fickle Fortune on me frown,
My ruined state would call the tear
  From sympathetic Freddy Brown.
The world would not be all a blank—
  One solace would remain for me;—
But I've a balance at my bank,
  While Fred is always "up a tree."

Were I in lack of good advice,
  Dear Sammy Smith would volunteer
To call upon me in a trice,
  And pour his counsel in mine ear.
Still Sammy is, I must confess,
  About the biggest ass on earth;—
So, gentle reader, you may guess
  What Smith's opinion would be worth.

"RAIN, RAIN, GO AWAY!"

FOR the Londoner leading a bachelor life
There are miseries ample in store.
There is want of a home, there is want of a wife;
There are millions of miseries more.
We have all many troubles and cares, I suppose,
But I've this bitter truth to lay down—
That the worst of the woes a poor bachelor knows
Is a very wet Sabbath in town.

When the morning is bright and the weather looks fair,
You can take up your hat and your gloves,
And enliven your spirits by breathing the air
In the haunts that a Londoner loves.
You may stroll as you list from the dawn to the dark
When the sky has no signs of a frown;—
But you cannot well visit Pall Mall or the Park
On a very wet Sabbath in town.

When a friend (and a dear one) invites you to dine,
You may laugh your depression to scorn;
You may chirrup with glee o'er his meats and his wine,
And be happy till two in the morn.
But there stands not a hostel in merry Cockayne
(Whatsoever its worth and renown),
Where the best of all dinners would not be in vain
On a very wet Sabbath in town.

TO A LOVELY ACTRESS.

BRIGHT being, deign to listen to my hopes and to my fears,
Though the homage of a multitude may linger in thine ears.
Thou hast earned a people's plaudits, and I doubt if thou canst care
For one fond heart's adoration—for one breaking heart's despair.

I have watched thee—how intently!—from the front row in the pit
(It is just about the centre that I generally sit).
Yesternight I saw thee smiling, but the smile was not for *me;*
Nay, I fear it was intended for the upper box, O. P.

I have witnessed thee in SHAKESPEARE, I have seen thee in burlesque
(I've a neat extravaganza nearly ready in my desk).
I was present on that evening when thy *débût* took the town,
In a little farce of JONES'S, and a comedy by BROWN.

Is it strange that I should love thee? or particularly strange
I should ask thee for a trifle of affection in exchange?
Is it any fault of mine, too, that I *have* been married twice,
And my life is drawing quickly to the time of "second-price"?

I cannot give thee rank or fame; I cannot give thee gold;
But richer far this trusting heart than opulence untold.
I cannot bring thee beauty; but, as far as talent goes,
Why, I trust there *may* be intellect behind a turn-up nose!

Oh! pardon me, adored one, for conveying thee a hint
Of the passion that consumes me—and for putting it in print.
If I publish my emotion, 'tis for all the world to see
That the tide of that emotion sets to thee—and *only* thee!

"*DRIP! DRIP! DRIP!*"

I.

AMONG the horrid acts we read
Of Torquemada's Inquisition,
I recollect a cruel deed
Befitting any fiend's commission.
The trick was very simply done:
(True genius ever is adaptive!)
Mere water-drops fell one by one
Plump on the cranium of the captive.

II.

'Twas quite refreshing first of all;
The heated brain found solace in it;
But soon the thing began to pall,
And made an age of every minute.
At length, to crown the dire effect
Of this eternal patter-patter,
A man of giant intellect
Became as mad as any hatter.

III.

Within our gentler modern life
  Such deeds could never find revival;
Yet in my true and loving wife
  Doth Torquemada boast a rival.
I never curse the cruel Fates
  Who brought me down to this condition:
I doat on her who emulates
  The late lamented Inquisition.

IV.

For her I sacrificed my Club—
  My pet resort—my seventh heaven;
To her I've yielded up my Chubb,
  And *must* be home before eleven.
I wear a pleased and placid grin,
  And strive to clank my fetters gaily:
Open revolt would be a sin,—
  But oh! the drops are dropping daily.

V.

She dreads tobacco—though the smell
  Is innocent, physicians tell us;
And, worst of all (I know it well),
  My lady is a little jealous.

Her fears are evidently vain,
For banished is my mild Manilla ;
The cook's exceptionally plain,
The housemaid is a she-gorilla.

VI.

Long years have I endured the rack
From January to December.
One straw will break the camel's back,
But that must be the *last*, remember.
Not many more can I survive
Of paltry cares and petty trammels :
The end will very soon arrive ;
My back is weaker than the camel's.

THROWN AWAY.

A LINNET had perched on a myrtle spray
To idle its time in its own sweet way;
Innocent thing—defiant of capture—
Chirping a melody mad with rapture.
Oaks and ashes and elm-trees heard,
Nodding applause to the chanting bird;
The longer it sang the richer the plaudits
Paid by its woodland Court of Audits.

Still as the melody sank or swelled
It seemed that Nature her breathing held.
On a rose's petal a dewdrop glistened;
The dewdrop lingered, the wild rose listened.
Even the rivulet gliding past
Perhaps for the moment flowed less fast;
And the only lukewarm panegyric
Was that of the bard who writes this lyric.

For I am a Cockney, all in the dark
As to the linnet and as to the lark.
The oak and the ash and the elm-tree never
One from another can I dissever.
The song of the singer and all the glee
That it cast around were lost on *me.*
Less dear the notes of a woodland birdie
Than even a town-played hurdy-gurdy.

SUBLIMELY UNCONSCIOUS.

TO the flowers of earth, to the stars above,
To the sounding seas I have breathed my love.
I have hymned it morning and noon and night,
In poesy fit for a Bedlamite.
I have sung of my love to my Broadwood's grand;
I have brooded upon it across the Strand—
Yet, bold as I am, I should hardly dare
To speak of my love to my lady fair.

The flowers were kind and the stars polite,
And the deep seas pitied my hopeless plight.
The verses I wrote were weak in rhyme;
But they brought me joy for a brief, brief time.
My grand with my sorrows would oft condole,
And the Strand was dear to my Cockney soul.
I melted my listeners everywhere;—
But could I have melted my lady fair?

The flowers can fade, and the stars grow dim,
And the seas bring peril to life and limb;
And versification is oft a bore,
Unless for a guinea a line or more.
The pitch of my Broadwood's grand runs down.
There are prettier walks than the Strand in town.
So, altogether, I scarcely care
To risk the "No" of my lady fair.

TALES OF A GRANDFATHER.

GIDDY girls, you may laugh at your Grandpapa *now*,
And enjoy putting pins in his chair;
Doubled up is this figure and furrowed this brow,
Very scant are these teeth and this hair.
You may speak of me still in your soft pretty way
As the quaintest old image unhung;
But a fond recollection survives my decay—
I was very good-looking when young.

Half a century *does* make a sort of a kind
Of a difference, mark you, my dears;
And the brief way to reckon my age up, I find,
Is in tens or in dozens of years.
I must be about eighty or so, by the clock;
But my mind is a little unstrung,
And my talent for counting has come to a block;—
I was brilliant at figures when young.

In the dash-along hard-living Regency days
I was prince of the fashion and style.
When I drove in the Park with my carriage and bays,
Even Brummell bent low at my smile.
What was gold? A mere nothing. In pleasure and play
Far and wide it got scattered and flung;—
For, though now on the parish, I proudly can say
I was rolling in riches when young.

Oh, the flirting and frolic and fun that we had!
I was called an Adonis in curls.
There was many a feminine heart very sad
When I married your Grandmother, girls.
I had rĭvals; but what was a rival to *me*,
With my figure, my face, and my tongue?
Ah, believe me, the squalid old pauper you see
Was a dashing Don Juan when young.

DIFFICULT TO PLEASE.

I NEVER knew an uncle's love—an aunt's
attentive care—
A first or second cousin whose emotions I could
share;
I've not one distant relative (by marriage or by birth)
To soothe me in my sadness, or to join me in my
mirth.
My brothers and my sisters are as kind as they can be;
I dote upon my parents, who are passing fond of *me;*
But I wish the Fates could manage—though I'm quite
aware they can't—
To let me have an uncle, and some cousins, and an
aunt!

If I could have a hundred pounds paid annually down,
And loving hearts about me in some cottage out of
town—
Sequestered from the hum of men and Trade's eternal
noise,
I'd spend my modest competence in Melibœan joys.

'Tis true that I am opulent—I live in regal state,
And pampered menials bring me food on gold and silver plate;
Yet now and then I hanker for a pastoral career,
And think I might contrive it on a hundred pounds a year.

Could I produce a work of art to win a deathless name—
I mean a drama to arouse a multitude's acclaim—
How happily and proudly should I bow before the crowd,
While pit and gallery, box and stall, cried "Author!" long and loud.
I've penned sensation articles and poems by the score—
I've written twenty novels; or, it may be, rather more;
And yet, amidst my triumphs, I occasionally sigh,
And murmur, "May I live to write a drama by and by!"

If I were tall and slender, with a mane of auburn hue,
And if my nose were aquiline, and if my eyes were blue—
How carefully I'd cultivate Byronic looks and ways,
And make my hearers wonder with a foolish face of praise.

I'm only just the middle height (but not at all robust);
I'm highly prepossessing in appearance, as I trust;
My eyes are big and brilliant, and my locks are black
as jet;
Had I the pow'r of dyeing both, I might be happy yet.

CATCHING AT A STRAW.

THOUGH the planet of Love has grown dimmer
And threatens to vanish outright,
Though the pale star of Hope gives a glimmer,
And nought but a glimmer to-night;
Still my planet and star are above me,
Still neither hath left me for good;
Though my loved one refuses to love me,
She owns that she "would if she could."

They have bidden her think of another,
She bends to the cruel command
Of a tyrannous father and mother,
Who claim to dispose of that hand.
When I pleaded my depth of devotion
She said—or I misunderstood—
That she dared not encourage the notion,
But certainly "would if she could."

Shall I ever be happy, I wonder,
With any one else for a wife?
No—the Fates that have torn us asunder
Have left me a Cœlebs for life.
But one bright recollection may cheer me
And shine on my bachelorhood;
Yes—my love, in declining to hear me,
Confessed that she "would if she could."

PURE GRATITUDE.

I LED a life serenely gay,
Without a shadow of a care.
My only wants from day to day
Were clothes and victuals, light and air.
But Love and Beauty forged me chains,
And Cupid with his fond mammà
Turned all my pleasures into pains—
Nous avons changé tout cela.

For *I* was young and very green,
And *she* was young and very fair.
She marked my dignity of mien;
She praised my freely flowing hair.
'Twas all dishevelled, all unkempt,
And yet it won her heart away.
From treating it with calm contempt,
I've come to brush it ev'ry day.

She read my verses o'er and o'er,
  And thought they were extremely grand.
She read my essays, and she swore
  My prose betrayed a master hand.
That hand, so masterly before,
  Is getting cleaner now, I hope.
I wash it once a day, or more,
  With water and some honey-soap.

She loved my high poetic brow:
  I got a fifteen shilling hat.
'Tis damaged by the weather now
  To some extent—but what of that?
My figure pleased her, for she thought
  My form as classic as my mind.
I went immediately and bought
  The loudest suit that I could find.

'Twas gratitude, and nothing less;
  It made me prouder than a king
That she bewailed my loneliness,
  And smiled on such a wretched thing.
Our loves are dead;—for good or ill
  A second life they gave to me.
I'm not respectable; but still
  I'm better than I used to be.

MY NEIGHBOUR.

MORALIST, you lose your labour:
Put your maxim on the shelf.
Nobody can love his neighbour
As he loves his loving self.
Meek am I as any baby;
I've a temper of the best.
I could love my foe, it may be,
But my neighbour I detest.

All my tastes are truly rural,
So I sought a calm abode
In an Eden extramural—
Number Nine, Amanda Road.
Fancy how my hopes were blighted
When the noisiest of men,
By some wicked imp incited,
Came to dwell at Number Ten.

Though the clerk of an attorney
I'm an enemy to strife;
I would make an easy journey
All the way throughout my life.
How can life go very gaily
(Either mine or other men's),
If a neighbour wakes you daily
With a lot of cocks and hens?

Ev'rybody has his hobby;—
Hydrophobia's one of mine,
Since our bravest local Bobby
Perished from a bite canine.
When I pass my neighbour's gateway—
Which I'd rather not, by half—
I expect his terrier straightway
To detain me by the calf.

When at even, home returning—
Worn and wearied through the day—
When for peace and quiet yearning,
Still my neighbour stops the way.
Home will ever fail to cheer me,
E'en in so retired a place,
While I have that fellow near me
Practising the double-bass.

Reader, think me not a scorner
  Of the human race, I pray :
I am friends with round the corner,
  And I like across the way.
All the street—or very nearly—
  I converse with now and then ;
And could love my neighbour dearly,
  Were he aught but Number Ten !

"FOR EVER!"

A NOTE you sent me long ago,
And long ago I fondly read it;
And whether it was true or no,
For every word I gave you credit.
I have a notion that your note
Was lively and a little clever;—
At present I can only quote
Your final phrase of "Yours for ever!"

We deeply loved, I recollect;—
We nursed a warm, undying passion;—
In short, we "spooned" with great effect
In orthodox and proper fashion.
Our vows were not of such a kind
As years can blot or seas can sever.
In all your letters ere you signed—
You penned the phrase of "Yours for ever!"

That ardour is diminished now;
'Tis rarely we exchange a letter;—
The tender past, we both allow,
The sooner we ignore the better.
Our hopes are dead, our loves are o'er;
I must forget them, now or never.—
Don't write me letters any more
That end by saying "Yours for ever!"

A DREAM TO DREAM OF.

I DREAMT a dream the other night—
When Slumber's poppy-chains had bound me :—
Bright memories and hope as bright
Came crowding in a flock around me.
I bade adieu to real cares ;
I gave the slip to solid sorrows ;
And, buried in the night's affairs,
I never dreamt about the morrow's.

My feeble Fancy, so it seems,
Is nothing to be very vain of :
But now and then she brings me dreams
That I should love to dream again of.
I reckon, for its own sweet sake,
My dream of dreams among the number :
Methinks it was a shame to wake
In such a way from such a slumber.

I fear I cannot well portray
  The vivid features of my vision ;
To paint them in a prosy way,
  Would only be to court derision.
It strikes me, though as rather odd,
  (Through all my speculative scheming),
That—thanks to Morpheus, drowsy god—
  I never dreamt that I was dreaming.

A COMPROMISE.

WHEN pleasures fly and hopes collapse,
And cares are neither small nor few,
"To grin and bear it" is, perhaps,
A philosophic thing to do.
I face Fortuna's bitter frown,
And know repining is a sin.
When Disappointment hunts me down
I bear it—but I cannot grin.

I've had my losses—who has not?
In love and money, heart and purse.
Though discontented with my lot
I feel there may be many worse.
I've met behaviour less than kind
From folks that should be more than kin:
I say, "No matter: never mind!"—
I bear it—but I cannot grin.

No, no ; the wise ones of the earth
  May tell me never to despair ;
May bid me with a mask of mirth
  Conceal the ravages of care.
Nay, rather let the gloom without
  Show something of the wreck within.
While Fate keeps pushing me about
  I bear it—but I cannot grin.

SYMPTOMS.

MY mem'ries take me back as early
As boyhood's green and gushing day;
These eyes were bright, these locks were curly,
And Life was lively as a play.
A change has long begun beginning,
And Life is as a tale twice-told;
My eyes are dimmed, my locks are thinning.
Can these be signs of growing old?

As lithe and active as a kitten
I joined the sports or led the dance.
You might have thought me badly bitten
By some Tarantula, perchance.
No more am I considered sportive—
Gout grips me in its iron hold—
My dancing efforts are abortive.
Can these be signs of growing old?

Belief I cultivated blindly
In Jones and Robinson and Brown ;
And never could I judge unkindly
One mortal in or out of town.
I should not nowadays be willing
To credit Robinson with gold,
Or lend the other two a shilling.
Can these be signs of growing old ?

Once Angelina seemed angelic—
I fancied Fanny quite a dear ;
Of each I treasured up a relic
From day to day and year to year.
Their faces I can scarce remember,
For Time has turned my passions cold,
Love's May has lapsed in Love's December.
Can these be signs of growing old ?

What wonder I am weary-hearted,—
What marvel that it clouds my brow,
To think of what has long departed,
And think of what is left me now ?
The bitter truth is past concealing,—
The more my symptoms I unfold
The more confirmed becomes the feeling,
That these *are* signs of growing old.

MOCK MODESTY.

A FEW of the fellows that come to the Club
Are excessively modest though garrulous people;
Each gives his own merits a sneer or a snub
To exalt those of others as high as a steeple.
For any one loving—as *I* do—a lark,
'Tis as good as a play when they cackle together.
I never would willingly miss a remark
That escapes these ingenuous "birds of a feather.'

Poor X., let us say, brings a comedy out;—
But the critical press (which is awfully cruel)
Seems rather in doubt what the plot is about,
So it gives the unfortunate author his "gruel."
He smiles at the worst that his critics can say,
And observes that for taste there is now no accounting.
He bashfully begs you to sit through his play
For its exquisite acting and elegant mounting.

Poor Y., a musician with scraps of a voice,
  Is declared by the Club undeniably clever;—
In fact, I imagine the Club would rejoice
  Could he warble away at its Collard for ever.
He mildly but firmly denies he can sing;
  And he blushes when any one tries to *encore* him;
It seems, he asserts, a most marvellous thing
  That the Peerage admire and the Public adore
    him.

Poor Z. is a poet—a promising bard—
  But is under that curse of the poet's condition
Which doometh him—struggle he never so hard—
  To ignore the delights of a second edition.
He owns a great army of pressmen as friends,
  And the notices penned on his labours are glowing.
Those choice gems of intellect make him amends
  For the coldness the masses at large have been
    showing.

Our nature has phases most comic to meet,
  But I vow and protest the absurdest and oddest
Is found when humility covers conceit
  And inordinate vanity apes being modest.
Our Club is the brightest and best ever seen,
  For our Club is composed of intelligent fellows;—
But, somehow or other, they look very mean
  When they live upon puffs out of other men's
    bellows.

THE GENTLE SHEPHERD.

HARK how Corydon and Chloe
Greet us with a merry song!
I'll be Strephon—you be Zoe;
Let us join their giddy throng.
In the mead or by the grotto
Dwell with me, love, *à la Watteau.*

When our daily work is over,
(Only work to suit the lazy!)
Be it ours to live in clover—
Or in buttercup—or daisy.
Far niente be our motto;
Dream with me, love, *à la Watteau.*

Fast the dancers go and faster—
Arlecchino in the middle.—
Perched aloft, as ballet-master,
Pierrot nimbly scrapes the fiddle.
Would you miss the gay ridotto?
Dance with me, love, *à la Watteau.*

Come, a carol! Sure 'twere pity
  Leaving incomplete the frolic;
Sing some old Parisian ditty,
  Pseudo-classico-bucolic;—
Light as Offenbach or Flotow,
Chant with me, love, *à la Watteau.*

When the night shall close around us—
  When the dance and song are quiet—
We shall have a supper found us
  Of the best Italian diet.—
Maccaroni and risotto
Eat with me, love, *à la Watteau.*

SEPTEMBER IN TOWN.

SUMMER is ended, and Autumn is here—
Though for the present we're not very far in it.
Oysters are back again—awfully dear:
Still they are back, for the month has an R in it.
Leaves will be shortly beginning to fall
Thick o'er the Parks as the snow on the Jura lies.
When shall I fly—if I *can* fly at all—
Far from the bricks and the mortar to ruralise?

Nobody here to be met by or meet;—
Long have I grown of the terrible truth aware;
Long have I wandered in square and in street,
Desolate now as the walls of Balclutha were.
Blame not the bard if a desert so bare
Pains him to think of it—hurts him to speak of it.
Pity the plaint of his utter despair;—
"Oh! for the country, if only a week of it."

Barely a line in a day can I write;
Barely a line, either prosy or lyrical.
Dozens, when London is full, I indite—
Pleasantly morbid or mildly satirical.
Trained in the country a poet should be;—
Coleridge, and Wordsworth, and ever so many were.
Why not at once make a poet of *me?*—
Somebody—take me—directly—to anywhere!

MY BOTTLES.

THEY speak to me of other days
And mutely suffered pain;
They move my heart in many ways,
And move it not in vain.
Upon my shelf, against my wall,
I range them in a row;
And murmur "Bless ye, one and all,
Dear friends of long ago!"

There's not a label in the lot
But has a tale to tell;
Nor one that I remember not,
And can't remember well.
And gloomily on gloomy days
I love to sit and pore
Upon the ne'er-forgotten phrase,
"The mixture as before."

My own is not a healthy mind,
  But broods upon disease;
And nowhere could I hope to find
  Companions fit as these.
One bottle brings me back a cough;
  One brings me back a cold;
And one a fever warded off
  By tonics manifold.

Go, call them empty if ye will;—
  This philosophic brain
Can easily contrive to fill
  Those bottles once again—
Those bottles fill with all the fears
  And all the hopes of yore;
Till even Life itself appears
  A "mixture as before."

AN APHORISM.

YEARS ago, in my days of school,
I fell in a fury twice an hour.
(Years ago I was half a fool,
And foolery made and kept me sour.)
Riper and wiser age has brought
This axiom, simple and yet sublime;
Nothing is worth one angry thought,
For loss of temper is loss of time.

All experience tends to teach
The best and the worst of mortal men,
How the limits of life will reach
Only to threescore years and ten.
Life is made of a million parts,
And waste of life is a kind of crime.
Why these passionate fits and starts,
Since loss of temper is loss of time?

I've my enemies, Goodness knows—
  Who can exist without a few?
Secret slanderers, open foes;
  Ready for all that spite can do.
Let them chatter from dawn till eve;
  By day or by night, from chime to chime,
I hold my peace for I still believe
  That loss of temper is loss of time.

TRICKS OF THE TRADE.

I CONFESS that I feel an apology due
To the public who feast on my rhymes ;
Many things that I've written are grossly untrue,
Though I've stated them dozens of times.
I regret it ; I never will do so again ;
My resolves for the future are made.
I will worship the truth, and for ever disdain
To indulge in the tricks of the trade.

I have told ye, my public, of Poverty's pangs ;
Of the crust and the pallet of straw ;—
And the Demon of Want with its pitiless fangs
Have I often made efforts to draw.
What a lark !—I am rich ; I've a thousand a year,
'Twas a practical joke that I played.
Did I summon a sigh ; did I call up a tear?
It was only a trick of the trade.

With my quip and my crank, with my joke and my song,
I am first among jesters and wits.
It is only when *solus*, away from the throng,
That I've hypochondriacal fits.
All alive where the light of society beams,
I may droop now and then in the shade;
But my moods of depression are brief as my dreams—
Though of use as a trick of the trade.

I've remarked, and perhaps in a querulous tone,
That I thought it a sin and a shame
For a poet of promise to linger unknown
When he courts recognition and fame.
Did you fondly suppose that I spoke for myself?
I have laurels that never can fade.
You, my public, have some of my lines on your shelf—
It was merely a trick of the trade.

I have told you, no doubt, that I rarely was well;
That my frame was a mass of disease.
Little fibs of the sort are so easy to tell,
And in verse are so certain to please.
But I'll cut the concern, my transgressions are o'er,
The apology due has been paid.
Pen and ink, I devote ye to Truth evermore,
And abandon the tricks of the trade.

WHAT I WANT.

I WANT a heart—one heart alone,
To beat responsive to mine own.
Go, Fate, and look for one—and find it;
Or, if you cannot, never mind it.

I want—what magic in the sounds!—
About one hundred thousand pounds,
But shall I get the sum? I doubt it;
So let me push along without it.

I want a mansion in a square,
Or in a park, or anywhere.
Go, Fate, and find it in a hurry—
But stay, I won't be such a worry.

I want a fitter state of mind,
Much more contented and resigned:—
Then Fancy in her free expansion
May bring the money, heart, and mansion.

THE PARROT AND THE CAT.

I'VE a deep domestic tragedy that calls for your attention,
If your sympathy a minute you'll be good enough to grant;
And, by way of a beginning to my story, I may mention
That a year or so ago, you know, I had a maiden-aunt.
I was constant in my visits to her hospitable dwelling
For a quiet cup of coffee and a comfortable chat.
She possessed a mint of money—and the fact is worth my telling,
That she also had a parrot, and she also had a cat.

I confess that I grew jealous, for my aunt was deeply smitten
With her biped and her quadruped and all their pretty tricks;

She had known the cat and loved it ever since it was
a kitten,
She had known and loved the parrot when the bird
was under six.
And the beast was very clever, and the bird was very
funny;
For the bird was good at language, and the beast
was good at rats;
But I hardly liked the notion that my aunt should
leave her money
To an hospital for parrots or dispensary for cats.

So I seized an opportunity whenever I could get it
To instruct these hated animals in very wicked
ways;
Pretty Poll was very rapid at the lessons that I set it,
Pretty Pussy was a pupil to deserve the highest
praise.
If you ever heard a sailor speak the dialect of
Wapping,
I assure you that the parrot spoke a little worse
than *that;*
And it's only very rarely that you find a creature
dropping
Into such abandoned habits as that miserable
cat.

When I found myself the master of this noble situation,
I would gladly paint my joy, you know (although, you know, I can't);
And a month or so ago, you know, I heard with resignation
That I'd lost a friend and relative;—I mean my maiden-aunt.
When the lady's will and testament was read by her attorney
I was naturally present, with a crape about my hat:
I was paid for all my trouble and rewarded for my journey
By a legacy consisting of—the Parrot and the Cat!

(Sung by MR. GEORGE GROSSMITH, junior, by whom the music has been composed.)

CONFUSION!

I WROTE a note an hour ago
To Snip of Piccadilly.
"Dear Sir," said I, "to dun me so
Is obstinate and silly."
Referring to an old account,
I begged him to be lenient;
For I would pay the small amount
As early as convenient.

I wrote a note an hour ago
To sweet Matilda Marshall
(To whom, as many of you know,
The bard is very partial).
I crammed the paper full of love,
Four pages full of passion;
And cooed like any turtle-dove
In true poetic fashion.

Capricious Fate (who ever gloats
When bards get into messes)
Contrived that these impressive notes
Got mixed in their addresses.
Ay, that's the trouble—there's the rub :
The horrible suggestion :—
While sweet Matilda gets a snub,
To Snip I've popped the question.

AN UNEQUAL MATCH.

I MET a damsel in a dream,
With sunny locks—ah, such a gleam!
With eyes that pierced me through and through
At ev'ry glance—ah, such a hue!
In waking hours my dream again
Returns to bring me joy and pain.—
Ah, why was I a lowly churl,
And she the offspring of an Earl?

I vainly prayed that cruel Fate
Would lift me to some higher state—
Some situation far above
The one in which I nursed my love.
I dared not breathe my love aloud;
His Lordship was austere and proud.—
Ah, why was I a lowly churl,
And she the offspring of an Earl?

To share my meek and humble cot
Would scarce have seemed her fitting lot.
Those haughty oligarchs, they say,
Insist on dining ev'ry day.
She might have deemed it *infra dig.*
To milk my cow or tend my pig.—
Ah, why was I a lowly churl,
And she the offspring of an Earl?

It would have been my doom, no doubt,
Sometimes to be invited out;
To feast with noblemen, perchance,
Or join a Countess in the dance.
My manly form, I must confess,
Would be at sea in evening dress.—
Ah, why was I a lowly churl,
And she the offspring of an Earl?

To-night—as bedward I repair,
And slowly scale my garret stair—
I mean to pray, "O Sleep! restore
The dream you gave me once before.
Bring back my love—bring back my prize;
Her form and face, her locks and eyes;—
Make *me* the offspring of an Earl,
And *her* a lowly peasant girl."

THE SUPER'S DREAM.

I'VE played at the West, and I've played in the City;
But never got on with my managers yet.
On my honour I think—and I think it's a pity—
They're jealous and stingy, the whole of the set.
They allow I perform in a praiseworthy manner,
And own I'm a fairly respectable man,
Yet insist upon sending me on with a banner;—
And *why?*—Let them answer me that, if they can.

And why at the tail of my craft should I linger,
On salaries less than it suits me to name;
When I feel that one flourish from Fate's little finger
At once could promote me to riches and fame?
I behold in my visions a dim panorama,
Processions heroic in panoply grand;—
And in all the great parts in the classical drama
My own *alter ego*—myself second-hand!

Too fugitive dreams!—It was one of their number
That beamed on my sadness a fortnight ago.—
(Happy mortals inherit full often in slumber
More pleasure than mortals awake ever know.)
But the annals of Dreamland a rapture can tell not—
A bliss more ecstatic—a joy more serene;
For my manager, SOMNUS, had cast me for Melnotte,
And lovely Matilda MacTabb for Pauline.

Ah me—how my heart with ambition was burning!—
Ah me—how my pulses with energy beat!—
There was no indecision whatever concerning
The way to dispose of my hands and my feet.
O'er this bosom young Love with Apollo stood sentry,
To guard me from all that could mar my success.
I mistook not one exit, I missed not one entry;
And never confounded O.P. with P.S.—

The love of Matilda MacTabb had inspired me;—
I ranted—I bullied—I swindled—I fought—
And, in fact, I did all that my author desired me;
Which means that I did pretty much what I ought.
But alas!—I had studied five acts to discover
That SOMNUS had played me a practical joke:
For ere the Pauline—[my MacTabb]—and her lover
Could make up their minds to be wedded—I woke!

MUCH TOO KIND.

I'M the soul of good-nature, and make it my aim
To oblige all the world when I can:
And, wherever Society utters my name,
I am known as "that willing young man."
But our merits are faults when they run to excess,
As I'll try in two minutes to show.
I have learned for so long to say nothing but Yes
That I never could learn to say No.

People ask me to sing, or to play, or to dance,
Or to join them at cribbage or whist;
I would rather decline, but they see at a glance
That I dare not and cannot resist.
People borrow my coin in their affable style,
From a crown to a fiver or so:
And I lend with a smile, but regret all the while
That I never could learn to say No.

To go shopping with ladies I'm daily required,
Or to stroll in the Park or the "Zoo";—
And they seem to imagine I never grow tired,
Though I beg to remark that I *do*.
To a play or a concert, a party or ball,
'Tis my destiny nightly to go:
For of course my tormentors have learnt one and all
That I never could learn to say No.

When my time and my money both come to an end,
At the close of my earthly career,
Let me go to my grave as Humanity's Friend,
For my rights to the title are clear.
Let my epitaph run to the modest effect
That the gentleman lying below
Was perfection in all but one little respect—
That he never could learn to say No!

STANZAS.

TO A THOUGHTLESS ONE.

MY hair is gray, but not with years—
Despair has bleached my tresses,
Since you (the source of all my tears
Rejected my addresses.
The flame that made my bosom smart
Was bright and clear and steady;
I only strove to touch your heart,—
Your brain was touched already.

I told you how my passion burned,—
I breathed my true devotion;—
I murmured, "Is my love returned?"—
You hardly had a notion.
Yet still I pined the truth to find,
My chance looked not a bad one:
You talked of making up your mind,
Until I thought you *had* one.

Alas! you smiled on other chaps,
And came at length to doubt me:
Not having thoughts enough, perhaps,
To spare a thought about me.
Farewell! I break the fatal charm,
And quit you as you bid me;
I think you never *meant* me harm,
But oh! the harm you *did* me.

METROPOLITAN IMPROVEMENTS.

BY AN OBSTRUCTIVE.

WHERE'ER we wander—up or down—
They still go on improving;
The only cry o'er all the town
Is, "Push along! Keep moving!"
For architecture wins the day,
And celebrates her glories
By palaces that line the way
With six or seven storeys.

The haunts we revelled in to-day
We lose to-morrow morning;
As one by one are swept away
In turn without a warning.
Alas! while progress, at a touch,
Commits new devastations,
Our old resorts we miss as much
As elderly relations.

Ah, when shall we again pursue
  Our rambles and researches—
As once it was a joy to do—
  Among the City churches?
Those fanes have hardly left a trace
  To go in loving quest of;—
Our new-built City is a place
  That Mammon has the best of.

No longer we with pleasure plod
  Our way by Covent Garden,
To meditate as if we trod
  Some Cockney path in Arden.
We cannot call within our ken
  The homes of *Will* and *Button*;—
The coffee-houses, like the men,
  Are gone as dead as mutton.

No nook or cranny dear to me
  Should undergo removal,
Though Progress went on either knee
  To beg for my approval.
There's Temple Bar! I only know
  That hundreds will regret it,
Supposing that it has to go:—
  Still—if it *must*—why, let it!

TRUE FRIENDSHIP.

WHEN a scamp disappears from this region of woe
The survivors infallibly hear
That, excepting his own, he was nobody's foe;—
An expression more touching than clear.
O'er the tomb of old Higgins 'twere fitter by far
That the sculptor should carve on a stone—
After stating what all the particulars are—
"He was nobody's friend but his own."

Uncle Higgins, with numbers of thousands a year,
Is of course a most excellent man;
Which is more than they think of his nephew, I fear,
With his hundred and fifty *per ann.*
Does old Higgins come down with his dust? Not a *sou;*
Nay, the older old Higgins has grown
The more strictly he renders that epitaph true—
"He was nobody's friend but his own."

But with pluck and with patience I somehow get on.
And exist by the help of my brains;
While I wait for the time when old Higgins is gone
To a world where no currency reigns.
Should his last will and testament show some design
For his many past sins to atone,
I could curb my resentment and cancel the line—
"He was nobody's friend but his own."

AN EXCUSE FOR EVERYTHING.

THERE is merit in open confession, they say;
So I cheerfully pander to truth
By admitting at once that I still am a prey
To some pleasant illusions of youth.
I shall change for the better, no doubt, by degrees,
And in time be less gushing and green.
Laugh away at my errors as much as you please;
But remember—I'm only eighteen.

To the friends that have brightened my pathway in life
What a depth of devotion I owe!
They are guiltless of hatred, of malice, of strife,
Or of sentiment selfishly low.
What a darling is Jones, what an angel is Brown;
What a trump has young Robinson been!—
I may learn in the future, to run them all down;
But at present—I'm only eighteen.

I have grown, I confess it, a slave to the fair—
  Led astray by the first pretty face;
And, if Love be indeed a delusion—a snare,—
  You may pity, not envy, my case.
If I worship a score of the sex at a time,
  An excuse can be readily seen;
I will say to the censor who counts it a crime,
  Stop a moment!—I'm only eighteen.

I believe, and I fancy that others believe,
  To be rich is in truth to be great.
With a thousand a year for my life, I conceive
  I could live in comparative state.
The delights of a fortune I grasp at a glance,
  And the joys that a fortune may mean.
I shall make one by fifty, or sixty, perchance;
  But I've told you—I'm only eighteen.

When my style has been strengthened and polished
    a bit,
  I will burst on the wondering world
With a brain full of eloquence, wisdom, and wit,
  And the banner of genius unfurled.
I'm simply delaying on purpose to find
  How my talent and sympathy lean.
Only stop till I've thoroughly made up my mind—
  There's no hurry—I'm only eighteen.

"SHOP!"

WHATEVER you sell, Sir—whatever you trade in—
I hope I may mildly but firmly suggest
That, as well as the time all your profits are made in,
Enough is allowed you for natural rest.
No doubt the excitements of Commerce are thrilling,
'Tis hard from such altitudes ever to drop;—
But, at least for to-night, Sir—however unwilling—
Do put up your shutters and shut up your shop.

You see, Sir, I too am a tradesman and brother,
As greedy for gain as the best of my crew;—
Only *I* offer one thing, and *you* sell another,
And neither imagines he's worst of the two.
Of course there is nothing of rivalry in it,
Where each has a tree and inhabits the top;—
Still, by way of a novelty,—just for a minute—
Pray put up your shutters and shut up your shop.

Just fancy the state of affairs at a meeting
Of traders in ev'ry conceivable trade;
One and all in a frenzy, with fury repeating
The fact that their goods were the best ever made.
A picture so ghastly should act as a warning.—
This mercantile maundering try, Sir, to stop;
And, until you get ready for work in the morning,
Please put up your shutters and shut up your shop.

STRICTLY PRACTICAL.

IT is easy, no doubt, in a ballad or novel
To write about money as rubbish or dust;
It is easy to picture young Love in a hovel
Subsisting on water combined with a crust.
Common sense gives a different view to the question,
Let songster or novelist write as he may;
And a palace, if bards will excuse the suggestion,
Is not an unpleasant abode in its way.

To be caged in a cottage and starve like a Stoic,
To plod for a pittance of little or less,
May be highly romantic and rather heroic,
But cannot precisely be pleasant, I guess.
I declare I could love in as fervid a fashion
If lodged in the building by Buckingham Gate;
With a view of the Park to intensify passion,
And food of the best on the richest of plate.

So I mildly but firmly present my denial
To novels and songs upon Indigent Love;
And I promise hereby, if you'll grant me the trial,
To revel in riches and coo like a dove.
But my life in the future (though married and wealthy)
Depends very much on the bride that I win;—
Make me clever, good-looking, good-natured, and healthy,
And bring me a Duchess and let me begin.

BACK AT SCHOOL.

TRUANT heart and idle brain
Aid me in my toil again.
Long ye both have been astray
Keeping pleasant holiday.
Ye have stayed an age together,
Basking in the sunny weather.
School is open once again :—
Help me, heart, and help me, brain.

As for you, my fickle heart,
Finely have you played your part.
Emma Jane and Mary Ann
Must release you if they can.
Long as you have been a rover,
Now the time for play is over ;
You have surely had your fling,—
Back to school, you giddy thing.

Brain, I rather think that *you*
Are the lazier of the two.
You of sport have had your share,
Here and there and everywhere.
Bid adieu awhile to funning,
And assist me with your cunning.
Come and finish all the rhyme
Left neglected such a time!

BRADSHAW'S GUIDE.

AIR—*The Devil among the Tailors.*

DID you ever?—No, you never—dreamt of such absurdities—
Enough to make your noddle ache—it is, upon my word it is;
A handy thing for travelling I've pretty often heard it is,
And so I've been investing in a "Bradshaw's Guide."
But what with all the figures to be hunting up or diving at,
And what with all your efforts to discover what they're driving at—
The stations you are leaving, or the places you're arriving at,
I'm hanged if you can fathom in a "Bradshaw's Guide."

In a fuss you mount a 'bus, which article vehicular
Is very slow—because, you know, the driver's not particular—

"Do look alive; how slow you drive!" you shout in his auricular;
"My train's eleven-twenty by my 'Bradshaw's Guide!'"
Arriving at the station in a fuming and a flurrying,
You find a lot of passengers all hurrying and skurrying;
Old ladies and old gentlemen are bothering and worrying
For bits of information out of "Bradshaw's Guide."

In your book you take a look, to see how far your station is,
Begin to doubt, on finding out how tough the explanation is;
And when you've read until your head in utter agitation is,
You've not a high opinion of your "Bradshaw's Guide."
The startings and the stoppages have taxed my own urbanity,
Until my mighty intellect is verging on insanity;
If any book was ever yet a torture to humanity,
Decidedly the volume is a "Bradshaw's Guide."

DOUBT AND DECISION.

I.

MY mind is dubious, dreary, dark,—
Not a glimpse of day, not a sunbeam spark.
No making it up to confront a question
Unsolved for want of a mere suggestion.
All is mystery, all is gloom;
The organ of thought is a darkened room.
The window down and the blind pulled closely,
And somewhere a figure that broods morosely.

II.

Got it at last! By Jove, what fun!—
Clear as the noonday; clear as the sun.
What was I dreaming about, I wonder?—
What wild fit was I labouring under?
Something I took to eat or drink
Made such a hash of my brains, I think.
Well, no matter! I've made my mind up;—
Open the window and pull the blind up.

SELF-DENIAL.

THE most unselfish man am I
That ever was created:
And if you think this truth a lie,
Just hear it demonstrated.
Let four-and-twenty hours go round
On any clock or dial;
And still, wherever I am found,
I study self-denial.

Whene'er I see an oyster-shop,
If I obeyed my wishes,
I tell you frankly, I should stop
To taste the little fishes;
My purse is empty, and I feel
That hunger is a trial;
But proudly I forego the meal,
And study self-denial.

Within my heart, a while ago,
  Young CUPID came to lord it:
But am I wedded? Bless you, no!
  I never could afford it.
And, though my merit may escape
  The cynic's cold espial,
I think that in its noblest shape
  I study self-denial.

If any luxury is dear,
  I never stay to buy it:
If any task is too severe,
  I scarcely ever try it.
Though Fate may empty on my head
  The wrath of every vial,
I trust it will at least be said
  I study self-denial.

THE STAGE DOOR.

I STOOD by the door at the noontide hour,
With an armful of dog's-eared paper;
Long over a play of undoubted pow'r
I had wasted the nightly taper.
And I wanted the manager once for all
To reject the thing or accept it.
I had shown it to managers great and small,
And had carried it home and kept it.

I fell into love while I dangled there
(As a poor-devil author dangles)
With a pretty princess, who looked so fair
By night in her silks and spangles.
'Twas love at first sight for each and both;
But my life was a strife so lonely
That I thought it a sin to plight my troth
For love and for true love only.

I stood by day and I stood by night,
When the weather was none the clearest;
As an author who struggles to see the light,
As a lover who seeks his dearest.
But my life to-day is a sunnier life
(So my rhyme has a tinge of reason)—
For the pretty princess is my own dear wife,
And my drama ran all the season.

A SLAVE TO CIRCUMSTANCES.

MORE disreputable hound—
A more degraded castaway—
Was never met with, I'll be bound,
Than—Tommy Smith, suppose we say.
He tells me that he *might* have grown
Renowned, respectable, and rich;
But every chance was overthrown
By "circumstances over which,
Et cetera!"

Poor Tommy started in the race
Ambitious of a poet's name;
And struggled long to find a place
Amongst the favourites of Fame.
She slammed her door in Tommy's face,
When he implored an empty niche:
Poor Smith attributes his disgrace
To "circumstances over which,
Et cetera!"

Unhappy in his wedded life,
He's rather given, I believe,
To beat his children and his wife
From dawn until the dewy eve.
But if his troubles (not a few)
Have led poor Smith to such a pitch,
Small weaknesses like this are due
To "circumstances over which,
Et cetera!"

He has a tendency to drink
(Not only when he dines or sups);
His language, too, is on the brink
Of "shady," when he's in his cups.
He wanders idly o'er the town,
And speaks of dying in a ditch;
And, when he *does*, he'll set it down
To "circumstances over which,
Et cetera!"

MY BIRD.

LONG ago I loved, alas!
Loved a lass and very truly.
On a day it came to pass
That I made an offer duly.
Sinking on my knees I fired
Sighs and simpers in a volley;—
Fondly, madly I aspired
To the hand of pretty Polly.

Rapture, ecstasy, delight!—
"Yes" was all my Mary uttered;
But a mist was o'er my sight,
And my heart with ardour fluttered.
Yet within a little week,
Urged by frenzy or by folly,
I was flirting with a "cheek"
That amazed my pretty Polly.

She returned the little things
  Sent as proofs of my affection;
Chains, and photographs, and rings,
  Rather a unique collection!
Then my heart grew sick and sad.—
  Flirting may be very jolly;
Still my goings on were bad
  As regarded pretty Polly.

Conscience, that ill-omened bird,
  Morning, noon and even haunts me;
Day and night its cry is heard,
  And the ghostly echo taunts me.
When I'm brooding all alone,
  Sulky, sad, and melancholy,
Still I hear its parrot tone
  Ever crowing "pretty Polly!"

GOOD COMPANY.

AT evening in the winter time
I love to nestle near the fire,
At leisure polishing a rhyme,
Or dozing to my heart's desire.
Then, let it blow, or snow, or freeze,
The rain may stream along the street;
I little care while well at ease
Within my snug and safe retreat.

Should rhyme and reverie grow flat,
I take a volume off my shelf;
And institute a cosy chat
Between its author and myself.
Should *he* become a dreary guest,
I straight invite a dozen more
(My library is quite a nest
Of ancient and of modern lore).

I call my Shelley or my Pope,
  My Burns, my Dryden, or my Keats;
Or, should I seek a higher scope,
  My Milton here my Shakespeare meets.
For prose I summon Dicky Steele,
  Mild Addison, or burly Sam;
Or, coming later down, appeal
  To Hazlitt, Hunt, or Charley Lamb.

In Space's and in Time's despite,
  They come from ev'ry clime and age.
With some I talk for half a night,
  With some for only half a page.
Such clever folks!—I fancy, though,
  My pow'rs of thought their own excel;
For *they* have told me all they know,
  And all *I* know I never tell.

AMBITIOUS YEARNINGS.

[illegible] me ask your advice, Mr. Editor, pray—
[illegible] In a manner that robs me of rest;
[illegible] It moves me by night and it haunts me by
day.
I'll [illegible] seem like a person possest.
[illegible] unanimous and burn for a name;
[illegible] arms or in art or in song,
[illegible] and my renown. I think I should claim
[illegible] shortly before long.
I wish to be famous. I wish to be great.
Can I manage to be it, or am I too late?

[illegible] commence, Mr. Editor, sir—
[illegible]
[illegible] is the verse I prefer.
[illegible]
[illegible] much money down)
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] for a time.
[illegible] famous. I wish to be great.
[illegible] I too late?

The musicians are making a noise in the world,
And for music I'd always a thirst.
The romantic and classical flags are unfurl'd,
And I'm eager to fight for the first.
Shall I risk a recital and play through a list
From Talexy, Ganz, Ascher, and Strauss?
I believe my expression and firmness of wrist
Would be certain to draw me a house.
I wish to be famous, I wish to be great.
Can I manage to do it, or am I too late?

After all, very likely "the play is the thing,"
As the sweet Swan of Avon observes.
I've a drama prepared that would act like a spring
On the lachrymal duct and the nerves.
Never doubt it will prove a colossal success;
And I hope, Mr. Editor, *you*
And your many good friends on the critical press
Will be ready with all you can do.
I wish to be famous, I wish to be great.
Can I manage to do it, or am I too late?

I have told you my troubles and opened my heart;—
Now I nervously wait a reply.
Any gems of advice that you please to impart
I shall treasure, of course, till I die.

I repeat, I shall value as long as I live
Whatsoever you choose to confide;—
Only whether I act on the lessons you give
Is a matter for *me* to decide.
I wish to be famous, I wish to be great.
Can I manage to do it, or am I too late?

A MARTYR.

"I can't get out!"—*Sterne's Sentimental Journey.*

YORICK heard thee, pretty starling,
And on one undying page
Fixed thy plaint, my little darling,
While it fluttered from thy cage.
Yes, the tender Yorick heard thee
With a sympathy devout,
When captivity had stirred thee
To the cry, "I can't get out."

Thus the words became historic;
Thus will they continue so.
Ah, that *I* possessed a Yorick
To perpetuate my woe.
Free as air my friends are flying
Here and there and far about;
Nought remains for me but sighing,
Like thyself, "I can't get out."

Some are deep amongst the heather,
  Some are sailing on the sea.
All—to take them altogether—
  Are as happy as can be.
Save in summer, London City
  Has a charm, without a doubt;
Still in summer one may pity
  Him who sighs "I can't get out."

TO A COQUETTE.

HOW often have you told me, dear,
That patience is a virtue!
I'm nearly out of it, I fear,
You flighty little flirt, you.
I mean to throw your chains away,
And fit some other set on;
Forgetting that unlucky day—
The day that first we met on.

I mean to play a bolder part,
And (slowly, dear, but surely)
Win back the lacerated heart
You thought your own securely.
The toy I take away from you
Elsewhere will be presented;
And still may look as good as new
If properly cemented.

I'll send you back your lock of hair—
  Your photograph (untinted);
It made you younger than you were,
  As I've already hinted.
I'll send your letters, ev'ry note;—
  Why, folks would hardly credit
The sprawly, peaky hand you wrote—
  And yet I always read it.

Those brooches and the little rings—
  You may as well return them.
My letters, too, the silly things—
  I think I'd better burn them.
Farewell!—and yet we *must* contrive
  One meeting ere we sever.
I'll call to-morrow, then, at five,
  To say "Adieu for ever!"

THE NIGHT-GUARDS.

"OH, tell me, tell me, mother mine,
What sounds are those that break the stillness?"
Thus asked a boy of eight or nine,
Still weak from very recent illness.
"Oh, tell me; for methinks I hear
The clash of arms, my mother dear."

The mother listened for a while;
Two briny tears bedimmed her lashes;
She heard the step of rank and file
Of subalterns in showy sashes.
'Twas vain to chide the starting tear;—
Her husband was a Grenadier.

On either side the street there went
Stern men with guns upon their shoulders.
All pale—but resolute—they bent
Knit brows upon the scared beholders.
Amidst the troops (towards the rear)
The matron marked her Grenadier.

"Sleep, child," she muttered; "sleep to-night,
Thy father will return to-morrow.
At duty's voice, till morning's light
He leaves me to thyself and sorrow.
At glory's call defying fear,
He goes to guard the Bank, my dear.

"To guard the grim and lonely pile,
And keep secure the sombre portals
Against the foes of Britain's isle,
Or British but nefarious mortals.
The night is long—the night is drear;
But father is a Grenadier.

"To Drury Lane another band
Will march with dauntless resolution,
And, fully armed, for hours will stand
Before that Thespian institution."
"O mother!" shrieked the boy in fear,
"I would not be a Grenadier!"

DAY AND NIGHT.

THERE are days without a pleasure,
There are nights without a star.
There are times when all the treasure
Of our hopes has flown afar.
But the day is quickly over,
And a night is quickly past,
And the hope that is a rover
May return to us at last.

If the day forbids the flowing
Of our bitter tears to cease,
There is comfort in the knowing
That the night will bring us peace.
In a night of sad endurance,
In the darkness of our pain,
We have ever the assurance
That the dawn will come again.

As the night will bring its morrow,
And the morrow bring its night,
So the seasons of our sorrow
Bring the seasons that are bright.
So the day will soon be over,
And the night will soon be past;
And, if Joy has been a rover,
'Twill return to us at last.

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VEGETARIAN VERSICLES.

COME, fill up your bumpers—and fill to the brink—
On the present auspicious occasion;
Let nobody shrink from his victuals or drink,
By an effort at artful evasion.
The fruits of the earth give our festival birth;
See, the apples and pears are before us!
Then, brothers, give way to unlimited mirth,
And indulge in a limited chorus.

Chorus.

Ev'ry scoffer that eats deleterious meats
May at present shut up and be quiet;
Each epicure sees that we feast at our ease
On a strict vegetarian diet.

Come, let us be merry. Our motto to-day
Is, *Desipere dulce in loco.*
We all have our curds, and we all have our whey,
And we all have our joram of cocoa.

Then pass me the grapes. Let us banish dull care!
Hand me over yon orange of Seville.
To laugh at our banquet should any one dare,
The intruder may go to the Old Gentleman!
Chorus—Ev'ry scoffer, &c.

Why slay the wild pheasant? Why butcher the ox?
Or adapt the mild sheep into mutton?
More fierce than the lions, more hard than the rocks,
Is the gorge of the amateur glutton.
To torture dumb animals—never mind how—
May indeed make Humanity shudder;
The neat-handed Phillis who milketh her cow,
Hath a heart that can feel for an udder.
Chorus—Ev'ry scoffer, &c.

Fight shy of the cutlet, the steak, and the chop;
Or I warn thee, unwary beginner,
Thine animal hankerings only may stop
At a cut from the joint for thy dinner.
Far, far from our thoughts be the barbarous deeds
That would hurry poor brutes to the slaughter;
Lo! even the lyrics we pen for our feeds
Only savour of milk and of water.
Chorus—Ev'ry scoffer, &c.

MY FIRST LOVE.

WE met one evening in the dance;
When I—the greenest of Etonians—
Was fascinated by a glance
She gave me in the "Caledonians."
The topics we enlarged upon
Were music and the drama merely,
But soon my silly heart was gone;—
It was indeed—or very nearly.

Long after that unguarded hour
I sent her photographs in letters;
And did the utmost in my pow'r
To grow as ardent as my betters.
I wooed in poetry and prose;
In each I swore I loved her dearly.
The truth I told her, goodness knows;
I did indeed—or very nearly.

An early love is quite alone;
It brooks no second-hand revival;
And such a love I deemed my own
Until I found I had a rival.
I only had myself to thank;
But I remember, pretty clearly,
That all my life was made a blank;
It was indeed—or very nearly.

And I have loved and loved again,
And have not finished yet, it may be.
My memory can scarce retain
That love I nursed when half a baby.
But, while I was a boy at school,
I must confess (and quite sincerely)
I acted like a little fool;
I did indeed—or very nearly.

THE TWO QUESTIONS.

I PINE for the hills—for the lakes—for the heather;
I fervently long to be somewhere away.
One cannot be growling all day at the weather,
Or getting through ices and claret all day.
By Zeus, if I only could manage to borrow
Of Cook or of Gaze a suggestion or two,
I'd pack up my traps and be off by to-morrow;—
But where shall I wander, and what shall I do?

The squares of the West are deserted and lonely,
The parks given o'er to estival repose;
And very few Members of Parliament only
Will wait for the Session to crawl to its close.
I sigh for new faces, new people, and places:
I sigh to take wing and fly off, *tout à coup*,
Too far from this hothouse to leave any traces;—
But where shall I wander, and what shall I do?

For walking or driving, or steaming or sailing,
I'm equally ready, as luck may decree;
And equally ready, if need be, for scaling
The casual Alp or the chance Pyrenee.
But how can I settle my plans in a minute,
And how can I fix upon anything new?
I pine for my journey and long to begin it;—
But where shall I wander, and what shall I do?

SLOWLY, BUT SURELY.

EYES where a smile very seldom, if ever is;
Down to the ground in the deepest of reveries
Dropt so demurely—
Speaking as little of love as of merriment,
Still you can wound, and have tried the experiment;
Slowly, but surely.

Where there are wounds there are often recoveries,
Did you not count how forbearing a lover is
Too prematurely?
Say to your owner, blue eyes, without fretting her,
He who adored her may end by forgetting her—
Slowly, but surely.

I traded on the vile dissimulation
  Until I left my own, my native land.
One morning a seductive situation
  Invited me to India's coral strand;
That climate is a test for one's complexion,
  It rendered me as dark as a Malay:
My comrades often uttered the reflection,
  "Poor Green is getting browner ev'ry day!"

One hates to be a "sham" when over fifty;
  To dye, upon my word, was *infra dig.*
And people growing old are growing thrifty;
  'Twas cheaper, on the whole, to buy a wig.
Now all my friends ironically taunt me,
  They gaze upon my flaxen head and say—
In syllables that ever seem to haunt me—
  "Why, Green, you're getting browner ev'ry day!"

MY LOUISE.

I LOVE Louise with all my might;—
I've breathed my love with all my main.
One fact I mention with delight;—
The darling is intensely plain.
Why seek for loveliness, I pray,
Or charms or graces in a wife?
Deceptive Beauty flies away,
But Ugliness is ours for life.

Of Jealousy I've read and heard—
A monster with an eye of green;
To me 'tis nothing but a *word*,
I know not what the *thing* may mean.
Louise is mine, my very own—
Of that I'm pretty well assured;
If I've my doubts when I'm alone,
On seeing her my doubts are cured.

A lover fond will oft compare
  The object of his love and rhymes
With Venus or Diana fair,
  The goddesses of mythic times.
Such flatteries the present bard
  Has never penned, and never will;
For Fable I've a deep regard—
  For Truth I have a deeper still.

A DECIDED NEGATIVE.

AS a schoolboy I ever was partial to Brown.
We divided our toffee—divided our toys
To this minute (so schoolboys' tradition comes down)
We are quoted as friendly and brotherly boys.
But, supposing that Brown were to ask me to-day
For a share of my heart or a share of my purse;
I should sink the old friendship and stubbornly say—
"Not at all; on the contrary—quite the reverse."

I have known what it is to be head over heels
In a passion that knows neither limit nor span;
I have known what a loving young gentleman feels
When he feels all a loving young gentleman can.
But if Laura Matilda should come to me now,
And recall what I promised when lovesick or worse,
Do you think I should even remember my vow?—
Not at all; on the contrary—quite the reverse.

I was once an implicit believer in Fame,
  And would rather have grown to be great than be
    rich;
It was all my ambition to boast of a name
  As a poet or proser (I little cared which).
I was born with a brain of my own in my head,
  And believed it a blessing, and found it a curse.
Have I now any longing to write or be read?
  Not at all; on the contrary—quite the reverse.

FROM BAD TO WORSE.

IN a part of a suburb sequestered and gloomy
I took up my quarters a twelvemonth ago.
My abode, I confess, was a neat one and roomy;
But—shade of Herr Zimmermann!—was it not slow?
I began to resemble that owl of a Rousseau,
Immured in a Hermitage all by myself;
Or that insular anchorite Robinson Crusoe,
Deserted and quietly placed on the shelf.

But the editors e'en in my solitude sought me,
And begged for my funniments day after day;
And the door was besieged by the postmen who brought me
Requests to be comic and mention my pay.
To be comic? The captive, in fetters and lonely,
May feed on his heart till its pulses are cold;
To be mirthful is left for the free, and them only.
He cannot be comic—not even for gold!

From the scene of my sadness at length I departed,
And found a new lodging that looks on the Strand.
What a change! The poor cynic, of late broken-hearted,
Possesses the lightest of hearts in the land.
While the crowds and the traffic float ever before me,
I breathe a new life in the midst of my kind;
And the sorrows that came to my suburb to bore me
No longer afflict my regenerate mind.

And the editors call at my residence daily;
But most of them rather unfeelingly hint
That the verses I knock off so lightly and gaily
Are scarcely sufficiently thoughtful for print.
Would I try to be touching? They're all of them eager
For sentimentalities put into rhyme;—
And they think my *vis comica* grows very meagre,
Though highly respectable once on a time.

By a plan I've invented—though not economic—
I think I can settle the whole of the band
Who expect a suburban recluse to be comic,
And seek to get sentiment out of the Strand.

My abode, I resolve, shall in future be double;
One deep in a suburb, one deep in the throng.—
Then perhaps I may manage, without any trouble,
To grasp the occasion and vary my song.

"TWO'S COMPANY."

—Popular Proverb.

MISS Jenny B—— was born for me,
And I was born for Jenny;
For any other Miss I see
I hardly care a penny.
Two turtle-doves you never saw
So fond of one another,
And yet my rapture hath a flaw—
My Jenny hath a brother!

A child of eight—or under that;
Of manners inoffensive.
You rarely find so young a brat
With knowledge so extensive.
For him two syllables are nought
He laughs at long-division;—
He says his lessons, as he ought,
With laudable precision.

Due reverence for me he shows;
He greets me as a "Mister."
The clever boy!—I know he knows
I love his pretty sister.
It *may* be chance—and yet I see
That more than chance is in it;—
He never leaves Miss B—— and me
Together for a minute.

I cannot heave the tender sigh
With any satisfaction,
While such an incubus is by
To mark my ev'ry action.
I cannot bend the supple knee,
And "pop" the tender question;
The very thought of Number Three
Forbids the soft suggestion.

We never meet—we never talk—
But those two eyes espy us.
We can't contrive to steal a walk
But Number Three is nigh us.
In such a sad and sorry plight
Perhaps it would be better
To plead my suit in black and white,
And register the letter.

THE REJECTED.

HOW smoothly runs the ballad old;
" Oh, say not Woman's love is bought!"
Alas! too often men are taught
That Woman's lover may be sold.

Those eyes were Paradises blue;
Their ev'ry flash a snake, designed
To work the woe of all mankind—
As snakes in Eden ever do.

Dim thoughts of all that might have been
Survive now Truth and Love are dead;
And even yet I seem to tread
On Hope's departing crinoline.

But, ere my footprint fades away,
Despair is close upon my track;
And, laughing loud behind my back,
She dogs me all the dreary day.

ON THE RACK.

I HAVE been through my alphabet carefully twice—
O'er my vowels and consonants once and again;
I have studied them all in a fashion precise,
But my labour is hopeless—my efforts are vain.
Could I find the initial the rest were secure
(For one letter would set the remainder correct);—
What a plague for a sensitive soul to endure
Is a word you remember but can't recollect.

'Tis a simple machine; you need never go far
For a tea-bibbing circle where hostess or host
In the front of the fire has it hung from a bar,
To retain the caloric in muffins or toast.
I have seen it in infancy—seen it in youth—
And shall frequently see it in age, I expect.
It possesses a name—though, to tell you the truth,
'Tis a name I remember but can't recollect.

But it is not alone in a matter like this—
Which is hardly a matter that matters at all—
That a treacherous memory serves one amiss,
And the things that you know you can rarely recall.
I've devoted my time to perusing the Bard
For the purpose of quoting his verse with effect;
Yet it often occurs, when I'm not on my guard,
That the line I remember I can't recollect.

If I go to the Opera once in a way,
Or indulge in a Monday or Saturday "Pop,"
I am haunted, of course, through the following day
By a tune that I cannot let utterly drop.
It is with me, though vaguely, the minute I wake;
In the course of my shaving I stop to reflect
On a quaint modulation, a run, or a shake,
In the air I remember but can't recollect.

I am worried and vexed from the morn till the night
By the scraps of old memories left in my head.
I should never complain if they vanished outright,
And the *whole* of the brief reminiscence were dead.
But my semi-revivals are bitter to bear—
'Tis to these that I mildly but firmly object;—
Not the things that oblivion has blown into air,
But the things I remember yet can't recollect.

LINES TO CUPID.

(OLD STYLE, VERY CURIOUS.)

WHAT, CUPID? At your thefts again
Too bad by half, you little traitor.
But here your efforts will be vain:
Cantabit vacuus viator.
Yes; point the arrow—bend the bow;—
At *that* your mother made you clever.
My heart's at home, Love, but I know
There's nothing *in it* whatsoever.

You stole—but I forgive the theft—
All that was ever worth your stealing;
You gave it Chloe, and you left
Nor warmth, nor sentiment, nor feeling.
I weigh my joy against my grief,
And pardon you my fret and fever;
For I consider Love—the *thief*—
No worse than Chloe—the *receiver!*

MIDNIGHT MUSINGS.

LIVELY prowler of the night,
Stealthy, creeping, cruel thing;
Say, what profit or delight
Can thy fitful frolics bring?
Wherefore later than the owl
Goest thou upon the prowl?

"Now the bird is in his nest,
While the beast is in his lair;
Now the fishes are at rest,
Free from sorrow, void of care.
Each and all their slumber take,
Thou alone art wide awake.

"Happy bird and happy fish;
Happy beast, where'er you be;
Sleep is with you at your wish;
Would it were the same to *me!*
Ever watchful is my foe;
Consequently *I* am so.

"Hence! avaunt! The world is wide;
Brighter spots may soon be found;
Where thy prowess can be tried
On a happier hunting-ground.
Seek thy prey across the seas,
In the wild Antipodes!

"Vex not thou the poet's brain;
Let him sleep and let him snore;
Cut—but never come again;
Fly, farewell for evermore.
Leave me cradled in repose,
Silent, all except the nose."

Thus the bard's unsleeping lyre
Virulently vented verse.
Reader, what aroused his ire?
Was it flea, or was it worse?
Gentle reader, spare your smiles;
'Twas a cat upon the tiles!

OH, AGONY!

JOY is a myth to me, mirth is a mockery;
Earth is a dungeon, and life is a chain;
Friendship and love are as brittle as crockery;
Peace has departed and comes not again.
Long did I riot in healthful security,
Treading on roses unmixed with a thorn;
Little I thought that my fate and futurity
Haply might plant on my trotters a corn.

Lost are the days when my lot was a shiny one;—
Lost from the minute I felt on my toe
Something I fancied a wart, and a tiny one,
Mildly but firmly beginning to grow.
Never again shall I feel the tranquillity
Born of a foot and a conscience at ease:—
Never again don a boot with facility,
Free from a sigh and a cry and a squeeze.

Some of my friends say I ought to put oil on it :
  Others that vinegar acts as a cure.
Vainly I've wasted my time and my toil on it ;—
  Still I continue to grin and endure.
No ;—in this worst of all possible maladies
  Vinegar heals not, and oil is at fault.
Shall I at last have it drest as a salad is,
  Adding the condiments, pepper and salt?

Daily and nightly my merciless visitor
  Fills me with fury, and robs me of rest.
Never in Spain did the sternest Inquisitor
  Frame such a torture as harrows my breast.
Oft, as I limp on my day's weary wanderings,
  One of those little red-uniformed brutes
Brings to a stop my poetical ponderings
  With a suggestion of "Polish yer boots?"

"A MERRY CHRISTMAS."

THE words are blithe and full of cheer;
They never pall on any hearer,
But—borne along from year to year—
From year to year sound ever dearer.

And yet we know the words are vain;
We know the season *must* be merry,
When those long-severed meet again
Below the white and scarlet berry.

When small but mirth-compelling jokes
Are heard from every nook and corner;—
When on the board Plum-Pudding smokes,
Attended by the Pie of Horner.

When kissing shall by favour go,
And Age declare it only folly
That Youth descends to mistletoe,
And lovely Woman stoops to holly.

When old, and young, and middle-aged—
  Three generations—all commingle;
The widowed, wedded, fresh-engaged,
  And, last and least, the many single.

"Merry?"—When all around is bright?
  "Merry?"—Ay, marry; now or never.
The churl that cannot laugh to-night
  May give the habit up for ever.

One week in all the fifty-two
  Is little time to give to laughter;
Come, join the revel, cynic, *do!*
  Although a cynic ever after.

Come, choose a seasonable strain,
  To fit the jolly days before us;
And shout we all, with might and main—
  "A Merry Christmas!" is the chorus!

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